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From the Campus to the Globe:

Race, Internationalism and Student Activism in the Postwar South, 1945-1962

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From the Campus to the Globe:

Race, Internationalism and Student Activism in the Postwar South, 1945-1962

by

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Dedication

For my family

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From the Campus to the Globe:

Race, Internationalism and Student Activism in the Postwar South, 1945-1962

Erica Layne Whittington, Ph.D.

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Supervisors: Jacqueline Jones and David M. Oshinsky

What drew southern college students into the struggle for civil rights? To help answer that question, this project examines student challenges to existing social practices in the South, and traces changes in their attitudes toward race and social justice from World War II through the early 1960s. Over that time, thousands of college students committed themselves to the idea that "keeping the peace" was intertwined with individual human rights at home and abroad. An internationalist outlook shaped interest in race relations, citizenship, and gender roles. Southern youth were central to this development, pushing for social change at home in accordance with their concerns about national security and world peace. This history traces networks of southern college students, focusing on the cities of Austin, TX and Chapel Hill, NC, both of which produced vibrant progressive student organizations and national student leaders during the early postwar period. It uncovers an important yet understudied tributary of the larger Civil Rights Movement, and helps contextualize the interracial, "Beloved Community" activism of the early 1960s. As black students linked internationalism with civil rights as part of the "Double V Campaign" following World War II, many white students also

began advocating for domestic desegregation, inspired by their experiences of traveling abroad and interactions with visiting international students. Integrated conferences sponsored by University YMCA/YWCAs and the National Student Association created a progressive, interracial student network. Through these organizations, many postwar students began redefining their own societal roles, and to explore their potential as political actors. Interracial encounters empowered southern students to envision new social relations between blacks and whites, women and men, and American and international citizens. Under the banner of "human relations," they began to break down personal barriers and to consciously relate to one another on the basis of shared humanity. This dissertation is the first historical work to closely examine organized efforts to change individual attitudes toward race among both white and black southern students during the 1940s and 1950s. It recaptures the early postwar dynamism of southern campuses, where students took action, in both their schools and their hometowns, to better their world.

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It was the decade of McCarthy, of Eisenhower and Dulles, the decade of students that David Riesman would characterize for posterity as outer-directed, the silent generation, I think it was called. These were promising labels, but they missed the closer truth, for real life at the University of Texas in the 1950s was like a circle with many rings – the smallest ring in the middle consisting of those students who were conscious of the labels and what they meant, the other inner circles progressively less aware.

Willie Morris, 1955-1956 *Daily Texan* Editor

It was just an emerging idea at the time, that we could, as students, come together in a homogenous group and have influence.

Lowell Lebermann, 1962 University of Texas at Austin
Student Association President

INTRODUCTION

> How, one wonders, do our practices of racial segregation here and our efforts to democratize the world square in the minds of the people of Asia or Africa? But then we quickly point out, calming their fears, and our own consciences, we only find it necessary to segregate a black person if he is an American citizen. Thus we keep it 'in the family.'
>
> -John Sanders UNC Student Government president & Ed McLeod, UNC Student YMCA president, 1950[1]

In 1950, students invited Dr. Toyohiko Kagawa, a prominent Japanese Christian leader, to speak at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. They advertised the lectures to the general public, but when UNC officials notified the organizers that the talks would have to be segregated, they opted to hold them off campus instead. The reason for this change of venue prompted considerable soul-searching. Classes at UNC remained segregated, but students had held interracial meetings before, and were surprised to learn that official UNC policy mandated segregation even at public events.[2] Student Government president John Sanders and Campus YMCA president Ed McLeod challenged this policy publicly in the campus paper, the *Daily Tar Heel*. In a town that

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1 John Sanders and Ed McLeod, "Policy Sits Above Conscience," *Daily Tar Heel* (Chapel Hill, NC, October 1950).

2 UNC would admit its first African American graduate and professional students, four law students and one medical student, in 1951. At the time of this lecture, however, a group of UNC students organized and raised public awareness in support of Harold Epps, a black applicant to the law school whose case was under review by the Supreme Court.

prided itself as a "spearhead of opposition to racial intolerance," they wrote, the university's segregation policy was an extreme example of "the illogic of our traditional approach to the race question in the South." Sanders and McLeod argued that it defied Christian principles to insist that "Negro fellow-citizens" sit in the back of the auditorium. The international guest lecturer had been invited to speak on the brotherhood of man, a point that underscored the hypocrisy of racial discrimination in a supposedly democratic country. Sanders and McLeod dismissed the university's contention that it must conform to "the majority beliefs of the State." Part of the university's mission, they countered, was to combat "ignorance and its evil effects." To do that, it had to remain "free to go far beyond that which is accepted in society at large."[3] Anything less, they argued, was an abrogation of UNC's duty as an institution of higher education to move civilization forward.

After World War II, students like John Sanders and Ed McLeod acted on the notion that American youth had a unique role to play in defending democracy and preventing another global conflict. Such an overt challenge to the school's administration over the issue of race was unprecedented. Like many other college students of the early postwar era, however, the experience of war had an emboldening effect. They could not ignore the moral contradiction of maintaining domestic segregation based on skin color while their country attempted to build positive relations with the rest of the world. Nor could they justify the discrepancy in treatment between international visitors and African Americans.

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3 Sanders and McLeod, "Policy Sits Above Conscience."

With the cessation of hostilities in 1945, that discrepancy was suddenly in display on college campus across the South, as well as throughout the country. In this period, youth from abroad flocked to college campuses in the United States as welcome guests. International students with darker skin quickly recognized their disadvantage, and many consciously devised ways to "prove" their foreignness in order to participate fully in the community. Particularly in the South, the increased presence and visibility of international students on campuses highlighted the aberrational quality of regional race relations within the larger context of America's postwar quest for hearts and minds. Young people in the postwar era viewed racial inequality as a moral and political issue with far-reaching consequences for the future of democracy. Black students continued to offer the most pointed and incisive criticism of the color line, and to insist that true desegregation required social equality. Increasingly however, white southern students also began to view older models of racial interaction as misguided. As postwar enrollments increased dramatically at southern universities, students found themselves negotiating a much broader cultural landscape than the one in which most had grown up. Somewhat obscured by more visible student challenges to *in loco parentis* and the explosion of interest in all things international, a quiet but persistent critique of southern racial practice began to take root on postwar southern campuses. As southern students asserted their rights and learned more about the world, they started to reject previously unchallenged rationales for racial segregation in their local communities.

This dissertation traces the gradual change in postwar student attitudes toward local racial mores, as black and white youth in the South came to view domestic race relations and American foreign relations as interrelated. It attempts to uncover the historical context in which students first convinced themselves and one another of the immorality of segregation, and then began to take concrete actions against laws they

considered unjust. In doing so, this project sheds light on youth activism in the South in the 1940s and 1950s that has escaped scholarly attention, and expands our understanding of the cultural milieu informing the interracial student movement of the mid-twentieth century.

This dissertation questions the sharp delineations between student activism in the 1950s and in the 1960s by exploring the process by which many southern students, both black and white, joined the freedom struggle. While viewing the sit-ins of 1960 as game changing and innovative, this study seeks to place them within the context of a wider intellectual and moral shift on American campuses dating back to the end of World War II. By tracing the rhetoric and activities of college students in the 1940s through the early 1960s, this study illustrates the ways in which an internationalist outlook powerfully shaped student interest in race relations and citizenship in the postwar American South.

In the 1940s and 1950s, the intellectual and political development of many students drew heavily from the ideologies of the New Deal, the common experience of war, and the changing international balance of power. Postwar students took seriously the idea that "keeping the peace" was intertwined with promoting democratic political action and protecting individual human rights. Historian Elizabeth Borgwardt has documented how the concept of human rights captured the American public's imagination during and after World War II, and the exponential frequency with which human rights issues circulated in newspapers and public discourse in the postwar era.[4]

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4 Elizabeth Borgwardt, *A New Deal for the World: America's Vision for Human Rights* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005). Also, see an edition of the *OAH Magazine* focused exclusively on the issue of human rights and American reform. *OAH Magazine of History* 22, no. 20 (April 2008).

This was especially true on college campuses. The war had been fought and won by young people, which conferred new legitimacy on their opinions about both national and international affairs. The concept of human rights became more common on American campuses after World War II, not only as a model of global justice, but as a means of preventing another world war. There was an explicitly racial component to this perception as well, since American youth had just sacrificed collectively to fight an enemy steeped in the doctrine of racial superiority.

A more subtle thread through this era is the nascent challenge by young women toward the dominant gender ideologies of the era. During the war, young women assumed leadership roles that had formerly belonged solely to men. The resumption of "normalcy" after the war did, for the most part, mean that men filled top elected positions. But the war had created openings for women on American campuses that could not be so easily foreclosed. Many postwar collegiate women quietly began to claim leadership roles both on and off campus, often working on community, human relations, and international issues.

Many idealistic American youth took great interest in the formation of the United Nations after the war, and believed strongly that the U.S. should assume the mantle of global leadership. Douglas Hunt, a white student at the University of North Carolina in 1945, recalled "there was a strong feeling that, by God, we had won the war, and we could do all sorts of wondrous things to keep it from happening again." This feeling of power and purpose attracted American youth, who viewed the founding of a worldwide organization as vital to the security of the nation, and wanted to be a part of it. Hunt helped to hastily assemble a gathering of Southern students, black and white, to "decide the part Southern students can play in promoting world peace" and to elect two delegates to send as official observers to the San Francisco World Security Conference where the

UN would be founded. [5] Delegates from all of the Southern states, as well as the "border" states of Virginia, Kentucky, Texas, Oklahoma, and Florida convened at the University of North Carolina campus in April 1945. Together, they represented fifty-four Southern colleges and universities.[6]

This unprecedented interracial gathering of Southern youth formed the Conference of Southern Students, and elected Fisk University's Charles Proctor as president and UNC's Douglas Hunt as the secretary-treasurer. The 38 white and 15 black attendees debated the contents of the proposed UN Charter in what Charles Proctor described hopefully as a "new note in intercollegiate and interracial cooperation."[7] Proctor wrote in the *Fisk Herald* that "it seemed as if the spirit of racial prejudice had taken a holiday at Chapel Hill" as "delegates were too busy attempting to justify the conference's stand on Dumbarton Oaks and Bretton Woods to remember the pigment proportions of the several delegates who held the floor during the discussions." They made plans for a permanent organization and "deliberately took the South's first regional step to true democracy." [8] A UNC reporter for the *Daily Tar Heel* concurred with Proctor's assessment of the Conference, writing that "[a]s I watched and listened, I saw a

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5 The invitation from UNC to UT read in part, "The present trend of events and the peculiar significance to youth of the plans for the peace make it imperative that the students of the South participate in the discussions of those plans." Ralph R. Glenn to President, University of Texas, April 9, 1945, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, UT-Austin.

6 Students attended from both the University of Texas at Austin and Southern Methodist University.

7 Charles Proctor, "A Vision Comes to North Carolina University," *Fisk Herald*, April 1945.

8 Ibid.

great vision of the future, when all citizens, male and female, black and white, shall sit down together and deliberate the laws of the land."[9] The participants drafted a Preamble that enshrined the related ideals of human rights and international peace as their organization's prime objectives.[10]

American involvement in World War II also inspired postwar American students to learn about other countries, to travel internationally, and to seek out contact with students from other nations. Many expressed the belief that such interaction would ultimately strengthen international diplomatic and political ties. To further this goal, American college students created study abroad and exchange programs, sponsored annual "UN Week" activities, and raised funds for students in war-torn and decolonizing nations. At the University of Texas and the University of North Carolina, Student YM/YWCA members organized holiday getaways for exchange students to small towns and country ranches to give them cultural experiences beyond campus. Newsletters from leading nationwide student groups like the National Student Association (NSA) publicized the plights of students in other countries, and invited international students to speak at their congresses. Nearly every college in the postwar era sponsored some kind of fund drive for young people in other countries, often under the auspices of the World Student Service Fund.

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9 Ibid.

10 The Preamble read, "We the members of the Conference of Southern Students, believing that we must constantly and actively defend the ideals of human justice, freedom, and democratic action, and believing that peace can only be won by the maintenance of these practical necessities everywhere in the world, do hereby establish the Conference of Southern Students to disseminate information, inspire action, and serve as an organ of expression for the students of all Southern colleges and universities who subscribe to the foregoing principles." Ibid.

These actions stand in stark contrast to the inaccurate but widely accepted view of American young people during the 1940s and 1950s as complacent, "silent," or primarily concerned with matters of affluence and social status.[11] This stereotype appears to particularly target Southern youth of the era, who appear in many histories of the Civil Rights Movement as a mass of as red-baiting, racist, and anti-federal reactionaries. Yet while these influences were real, and certainly shaped the contours of campus communities, the influences of progressive religion, national and international travel, national organizational ties, and progressive adult mentors and faculty strongly countered these regressive impulses.

Conservative local attitudes and mores hardly forestalled student resistance to parochial "rule-making" on Southern campuses. In fact, by the mid-1940s, students at many colleges and universities across the South were already overtly demanding greater academic freedom, "student rights," and more equality in their communities. In so doing, they began transforming the campus into a platform from which to question dominant social institutions in the country.

In 1944, for instance, approximately 5,000 University of Texas students marched on the state capitol to protest the Board of Regent's abrupt firing of University President Homer Rainey. They carried with them a coffin draped with the words "academic freedom," bringing national attention to the state's political repression of educators.[12] Similarly, in January, 1947, 2,000 students from ten Atlanta area colleges marched

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11 "People: The Younger Generation," *Time Magazine*, November 5, 1951.

12 Alice Carol Cox, "The Rainey Affair: A History of the Academic Freedom Controversy at the University of Texas, 1938-1946" (University of Denver, 1970).

against Herman Talmadge's unlawful action to replace his deceased father, Eugene Talmadge as governor-elect. They stormed the capitol and decried Talmadge's undemocratic "rule by force" as a fascist takeover of state government.[13]

Yet student action in the 1940s and 1950s, for the most part, lacked the telegenic drama of 1960s-era law breaking and direct action. While the latter trafficked in public spectacle and provocation, this earlier activism seemed more interpersonal and self-reflective, and often eschewed public attention. But it must be measured by its own standard, and understood within the context of its time—a time during which the mere physical proximity of white and black students invited retributive violence in parts of the South. This study highlights the kinds of student activities which took place in this time, where and in what contexts, and why it is significant. Progressive activism during this period, particularly in Southern colleges, tended to originate within structured, previously existing student organizations. It fed off the emerging postwar interests in human rights and global peace, becoming an important training ground for Southern student leaders, many of whom would make significant contributions to the freedom movement.

Students by definition are always in transit, and while they always possess political power, the way in which they have exercised it changed throughout the 20th century. Among the unique features of student leaders from the mid-to-late 1940s through the early 1960s was their commitment to working "through the system" to affect decision-making. Students of this era evinced considerable respect for "process," and resorted to overt and extra-institutional actions such as public marches only when other

13 Worth McDougald, "2000 Students March on Capitol; Protest Talmadge 'Rule By Force'," *Emory Wheel*, January 27, 1947.

formal avenues failed. Many also shared a deeply held commitment to making their own communities more democratic and egalitarian.

Relationships forged among students and administrative and community officials often yielded surprising results. Yet even when they did not, student action nevertheless increased public awareness of long-ignored social problems. The latter part of this study considers the differences in these earlier approaches with the direct action methods that characterized the student movement of the 1960s. Both involved conscious decisions by youth, but reflected different perspectives on goals.

Most scholars have embraced historian Jacquelyn Dowd Hall's expanded chronology of the "long civil rights movement" as extending at least as far back as the 1930s and beyond the 1960s.[14] Even within this enlarged framework, the early postwar years often seem like a temporary respite—a proverbial calm before the storm. Not all histories depict this era as one of complacency and conformity. Some historians credit postwar college students for acting as a "bridge generation" to the activists of the 1960s, including Douglas Rossinow in his classic study of the New Left in Austin, and Susan Lynn's research on women activists in postwar progressive organizations.[15] But the

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14 On the concept of the "long civil rights movement" and the "long sixties," see Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past," *Journal of American History* 91, no. 4 (March 2005): 1233–1263; Tom Hayden, *The Long Sixties: From 1960 to Barack Obama* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2010).

15 Douglas C. Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity: Liberalism, Christianity, and the New Left in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998); Douglas C. Rossinow, "The Break-Through to New Life: Christianity and the Emergence of the New Left in Austin, 1956-1964," *American Quarterly* 46, no. 3 (September 1994); Susan Lynn, *Progressive Women in Conservative Times: Racial Justice, Peace, and Feminism, 1945 to the 1960s* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992).

historical significance of this era with respect to civil rights goes beyond being a mere interval separating the Old Left from the New, and neither Rossinow nor Lynn's studies fully explore or contextualize student contributions during the years leading up to the sit-ins.[16] While emerging scholarship on individual student organizations and a number of memoirs and anthologies from postwar students are beginning to reverse this trend, there still exists no comprehensive historical treatment of student activism during the immediate postwar era.[17] In a sense, student activism of the 1940s and 1950s falls victim

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16 Rossinow examines the University Y briefly as he traces the origins of the New Left in Austin, but he focuses primarily on the late 1950s and early 1960s. My study of the early postwar era indicates the importance of Christian faith as a motivating factor among many students at the Y, but interest in international issues played a crucial role as well. In Susan Lynn's study of the YWCA and the American Friends Service Committee, she describes women activists in the immediate postwar era as a "bridge" generation. This is in some ways appropriate, but I argue that the concerns and activities of student activists in this era are worthy of study in their own regard.

17 See Tommy L. Bynum, "'Our Fight Is for Right:' The NAACP Youth Councils and College Chapters' Crusade for Civil Rights, 1936-1965" (Georgia State University, 2007) and J. Angus Johnston, "The United States National Student Association: Democracy, Activism, and the Idea of the Student, 1947-1978" (City University of New York, 2009). Angus Johnston's recent dissertation on NSA is the most comprehensive treatment of this organization to date. Two scholars of Educational Policy Studies have written about the origins and early activities of NSA. See "The National Student Association in the Fifties: Flawed Conscience of the Silent Generation," *Youth and Society* 5, no. 2 (December 1973); Robert Kranz, "International Education and Cocurricular Activities: The Origins of the United States National Student Association International Program", 1992. These works provide valuable contextual information about NSA within the history of student activism, but approach NSA with discipline-specific questions, and contain little information about the individuals who were involved with NSA. An invaluable and exhaustive resource for this period is Eugene G. Schwartz and United States National Student Association, *American Students Organize: Founding the National Student Association After World War II: An Anthology and Sourcebook* (Westport, CT: American Council on Education/Praeger, 2006). Recent memoirs include: Ray Farabee, *Making It Through the Night and Beyond:*

to its chronological proximity to the much more vivid, assertive, and confrontational activism of the 1960s, against which it is often judged and found wanting.[18]

Tracing the freedom movement back through the decades following World War II reveals an important, yet underappreciated tradition that developed out of postwar interest in world affairs – the study and practice of human relations. College students were drawn into a process of deepening racial awareness based on their interests in the spread of American democracy, and the importance of world peace and human rights.[19] Human relations served as a means to address conflicts between groups and individuals, but it was most directly applied to the problem of racial inequality in the South. Postwar students often used the term "human relations" as code for race relations, at a time when segregation was enforced by rule of law. This study analyzes the methods and evolving meanings of human relations and its relationship to direct action. I argue that human relations activities were an important tributary into mainstream civil rights activism, and that this tradition is essential to understanding the interracial origins of the freedom movement in the mid-twentieth century.

A Memoir (Austin, TX: R. Farabee, 2008); D'Army Bailey and Roger R. Easson, *The Education of a Black Radical: A Southern Civil Rights Activist's Journey, 1959-1964* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2009); Constance Curry, *Deep in Our Hearts: Nine White Women in the Freedom Movement* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2000); Celia Morris, *Finding Celia's Place* (College Station, TX.: Texas A & M University Press, 2000).

18 The collected essays in Joanne Meyerowitz' anthology *Not June Cleaver*, especially Dee Garrison's article on civil defense, help to combat the stereotype of this period and help to situate my study conceptually. See Joanne J. Meyerowitz, *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994).

19 Although beyond the scope of this study, many individuals who came of age in the 1940s and 1950s recall these themes as central to their high school curriculum.

Whereas rich local studies characterize much civil rights scholarship, this study is multi-sited, as it focuses on networks of college students that developed in the postwar era.[20] This study traces the connections these youth formed with other students throughout the region. At the same time, this is a comparative history of interracial student activity, focusing primarily on the University of North Carolina and the University of Texas, each the flagship public university of their respective states. In many ways, student governments at large state schools functioned as exemplars for other schools in the region.[21] UNC and UT served as "anchors" in the southern college world,

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20 Essential histories of the freedom movement include John Dittmer, *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994); Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995); Amilcar Shabazz, *Advancing Democracy: African Americans and the Struggle for Access and Equity in Higher Education in Texas* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004). Recent illuminating histories of student activism in the South during the 1960s include Jeffrey A. Turner, *Sitting in and Speaking Out: Student Movements in the American South, 1960-1970* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2010); Gregg L. Michel, *Struggle for a Better South: The Southern Student Organizing Committee, 1964-1969* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Wesley C. Hogan, *Many Minds, One Heart: SNCC's Dream for a New America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

21 The records of both the UT and UNC student governments contain extensive correspondence between student leaders at other schools, hoping to establish or reinvigorate their own student governments, asking for help on pet projects, practical advice on how to handle certain issues, and the possibility of collaboration. Moreover, the records of postwar student organizations indicate a particular devotion to democratic process, constitution writing and revision, and action according to precise rules of order. In the 1940s, the University of Texas Student's Association repeatedly revised its constitution. Barefoot Sanders, the student association president in 1948-1949, recalled that if a student government constitution were not amended or revised in three years it was considered "ancient." Likewise, students at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill had a long and proud tradition of "self rule," and they created an entirely new constitution at the end of World War II. With a three-part government system

and they cultivated student leaders who utilized various regional, national, and international organizational platforms. These schools serve as origin points for many chapters, because they fostered vibrant progressive college communities, with independent student institutions and organizations. Notably, both UNC and UT boasted strong student governments and strong student-run campus newspapers. The records of these and similar campus groups after World War II demonstrate a progression from the basic tasks of running an organization toward larger questions of student liberty and the rights of student minorities in particular. Thus, the records left behind by these student institutions facilitate a deeper understanding of the evolving attitudes of many postwar students toward segregation in the American South.

Progressive student circles overlapped considerably during the postwar era, and their activities often revolve around strong, preexisting organizations like the Student YM/YWCAs (Y) and the National Student Association (NSA).[22] University Ys, for example, were already well-established centers of progressive thought on southern

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that modeled the federal government's separate branches, the UNC model attracted dozens of colleges requesting information about how to set up a student legislature, how to implement an honor code, how to write a constitution, and other "nuts and bolts" issues in the immediate postwar years. Strong student institutions were difficult to cultivate, and without models and a strong framework, many students never gained the legitimacy or authority to partake in campus decision-making.

22 Other progressive student organizations existed during this time, including those connected with specific denominations, such as the Methodist Student Movement, Catholic student organizations, and in some cases, the Baptist Student Union (the BSU was a strong presence in the South, but differed in orientation, depending on the campus. It tended to be more conservative and focused on theological issues). The contributions of these organizations merit further study on their own, but students involved in denominational organizations often worked in conjunction with, or through the Student Y and NSA.

campuses, with roots dating to the 19th century. An organization with international reach, the combined YM/YWCA held national and regional meetings each year which brought together students from many corners of the globe. Campus Y chapters were self-governed by student members, and often reflected a distinctive "Social Gospel" philosophy of putting religious beliefs about social justice into practice. Although nominally religious, campus Ys were ecumenical, and attracted a wide variety of students who had a shared belief in the "the dignity and worth of a human personality."[23] At both UNC and UT, the YM/YWCA was at the heart of campus life, operating as a student hub, meeting place, and service center, as well as a cradle of campus leadership. YM/YWCAs worked together with student groups like Hillel, with whom they often shared their facilities. Campus Ys also became an unofficial home for both international students and minorities on campus.

The National Student Association (NSA), on the other hand, existed as a confederation of approximately 300 student governments. World War II veterans officially founded the organization in 1947 to meet a widely perceived need for a strong national student organization akin to those in other countries. From its inception, NSA functioned as the voice of American students on the international student stage, and brought thousands of students together for national and regional conferences each year. Chief among these were the NSA's annual conferences, held for three weeks every summer, during which student delegates debated and passed resolutions on student rights,

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23 Willie Morris, "Institution Under Fire - Living Theology; Smith and the 'Y'" 53, no. 51 (March 23, 1962). In the interview, Smith reminisced about the changes that took place in the area of race relations during his tenure as director of the University of Texas Y between 1921 and 1956. When asked how the members of the Y of 1962 might be different from earlier generations, he laughed and said, "Human nature hasn't changed."

academic freedom, and other current issues. NSA trained participants in democratic process, while creating a network of American student leaders. NSA's presence on Southern campuses was weaker than in any other area of the country however, and even its Southern affiliates often accused the national organization of communist leanings and racial liberalism. Debates over NSA affiliation on Southern campuses revealed the tension between those students who welcomed it as an avenue to a more meaningful and engaged collegiate experience, and those who saw the group as a potential threat to the status quo.

Southern racial conservatives had at least some reason to worry about the NSA's stance on racial integration. Both the regional and national meetings of both the Y and NSA were racially integrated in this period. But for racially agnostic and liberal Southern students, the national gatherings of both organizations presented rare opportunities to meet and socialize with students across the color line. These interactions challenged existing perceptions of segregation, and provided crucial experiences that prompted further action in their communities. Collectively, these meetings constituted a meaningful form of civil rights activism—in a time before the term "activism" was commonly used—and played an important role in the social transformation of the American South.

Among this study's contributions to the current historical reappraisal of the postwar era is its emphasis on the important, but often overlooked connections between international concerns and democratic political activism in the early Cold War. In this regard, it complements the scholarship of historians such as Mary Dudziak, Azza Salama Layton, Thomas Borstelmann, and Brenda Gayle Plummer, each of whom investigate the

opportunities created domestically for progressive change due to growing international scrutiny of American domestic civil rights and post-colonial foreign policy.[24] Yet while those studies focus primarily on actions of American policy elites, this study illuminates the ways in which Southern students navigated—on a personal and daily basis—the blatant contradictions between the ideals of postwar internationalism and domestic realities of race and gender.

My work also contributes to the study of international affairs as an intellectual and cultural phenomenon as charted by historian Akira Iriye. Iriye persuasively argues that the role of culture in foreign relations is as useful in history as the traditional focus on power and geopolitics. He urges scholars of international relations to adopt a more expansive definition of the field, which privileges cultural internationalism as "the fostering of international cooperation through cultural activities across national boundaries."[25] Iriye, along with Cold War historians Frank Ninkovich and Ron Robin, critique the rigidly geopolitical view of Cold War international relations for leaving out the actions of non-state actors, ultimately presenting an incomplete picture of the era.[26]

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24 See Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000); Azza Salama Layton, *International Politics and Civil Rights Policies in the United States, 1941-1960* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); Brenda Gayle Plummer, *Rising Wind: Black Americans and U.S. Foreign Affairs, 1935-1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

25 Akira Iriye, *Cultural Internationalism and World Order* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 3.

26 Iriye writes that this new conceptualization is necessary "if we are to inquire seriously into the roles played by ideas, aspirations, and emotions in the world. They invent a world just as geopolitical facts do, but these worlds are not identical. To

By placing the thoughts and actions of students and their organizations into conversation with more traditional histories of international relations during the early Cold War, this study seeks to augment the insights of more policy- and elite-oriented historiography of the period.

Histories of this era typically evoke a vision of Cold War American culture that was patriotic, family-focused, nationalist-oriented, and even hostile to internationalist ideas.[27] A closer examination of the youth of this period complicates this narrative considerably. Popular adherence to supposedly dominant ideologies like anti-communism was far from universal, particularly during the immediate postwar era. Far from stifling all dissent, "Cold War culture" also gave rise to unabashedly internationalist impulses, particularly on American campuses. This dissertation also shows that student activists were in fact proposing, as well as modeling, more equitable interpersonal relationships – a new kind of "world citizenship" that offered gender and race-neutral possibilities. A significant number of postwar students developed passionate and incisive arguments for fundamental changes in personal and international "social relations" in their activities.

Finally, this dissertation sheds light on issues of historical memory, and challenges the deeply ingrained conception of the immediate postwar generation as politically conservative and socially static. Political scientists and historians are only now beginning to add complexity to this simplistic view. Suzanne Mettler, for example,

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study the one, we should not apply the conceptualizations and methodologies adopted for the other." Iriye, *Cultural Internationalism and World Order*.

27 Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988); Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991).

has argued that veterans who partook of the G.I. Bill were more likely to be civically engaged and contribute to the public life of the nation.[28] However, Mettler bases her research on subsequent written and oral recollections of veterans. I argue that social activism among the G.I. generation can be evidenced more readily if we look to their activities as college students. When we do, we can see a commitment to internationalism and equality that shatters the classic narrative of a postwar generation concerned only with the geopolitical exigencies of the Cold War, and the material pursuit of the "American Dream."

As Cold War tensions mounted during the early 1950s, the "world cooperation" approach to international affairs became controversial, as it seemed to argue against a bipolar view of international politics. As a result of McCarthyism and well-publicized hunts for subversive activity in American life, enthusiasm for issues of human rights and world peace on college campuses assumed a more muted tone than previously. But youth activism during the 1950s was hardly a "Cold War casualty," as some scholars have suggested.[29] Instead, student organizing adapted to the more restrictive atmosphere, finding new avenues and spaces to pursue discussions and debate about pressing global

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28 Suzanne Mettler, *Soldiers to Citizens: The G.I. Bill and the Making of the Greatest Generation* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

29 Penny M. Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire* (Ithaca, NY; London: Cornell University Press, 1997). The American Veterans Committee, founded in this period, has also been written about in the explicit context of Cold War repression. Robert Tyler mentions that the AVC grew rapidly among student veterans on college campuses due to the G.I. Bill, but his focus is on the organizational disputes in what can be termed the "Cold War casualty" style that has come to characterize many descriptions of this time period. Robert L Tyler, "The American Veterans Committee: Out of a Hot War and into the Cold," *American Quarterly* 18, no. 3 (1966): 419–436.

issues. Student groups like the Y and the NSA became sanctuaries for open discussion of world problems beyond the rigid constraints of Cold War doctrine.[30] College students in both organizations also began drawing connections between their country's ideological competition for "hearts and minds," and the ways in which it manifestly fell short of its stated ideals.

Essentially, this study originated from an outwardly simple question: what motivated southern students to join the Freedom Movement? While the answers to this question varied by individual, there were certain gateways to the civil rights movement. For obvious reasons, they were not publicized as such, and as a result, many have been overlooked by historians seeking to trace the lineage of the struggle for civil rights in the mid-20th century South. Interest in international affairs and world peace, along with student organizations such as the YM/YWCA and the National Student Association were among these gateways, and their records offer new insight into how southern students, both black and white, found their way into the Freedom Struggle.

The unprocessed local records of the now-defunct University of Texas YM/YWCA, national YWCA publications, oral interviews, and UT student writings

30 For example, the University of North Carolina Campus Y held annual meetings that focused on the role of the student in international and racial issues. In 1948, they hosted speakers to address both the national and international aspects of the "The Complexity of our Age," followed by commissions on "Economic Tension in our world," "Racial Tensions in our world," "World Organization and Political Tensions" and "What Can Students Do About It." A similar conference in 1952, with the theme of "World Understanding," discussed class systems in other countries, as well as the issues, "What Friends from other Countries See in the United States," "What Can we as Citizens of the World to Advance Cooperation Among the Nations?" and "What Can we Do as Students to Advance Cooperation Among Students at UNC?" See Archives Collection: Campus Y – unprocessed, Folder – "Y History." The Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

indicated that there was much more to the story of postwar student activism than the existing scholarship recounted. In these sources, the 1940s and 1950s are full of student activity, not simply a "pre-story" to the 1960s, but a vivid array of debates and concerns that have largely escaped historical scrutiny. The records of the Student YM/YWCA at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, still a strong and vital center of student life, confirmed this appraisal. Further investigation proved that the Student YWCA had, in some cases remained the lone progressive standard-bearer on southern college campuses since the 19th century. By the 1940s, the Y was an intercollegiate institution with a rich history of student activism.

There was, moreover, considerable cross-pollination between the various, progressively oriented student organizations. After World War II, for example, many active student Y members became involved in the National Student Association as well. Indeed, the more one reads about this time period, the more central the Student Y and NSA become to the story of American student endeavor and exchange. This study traces emerging networks of progressive student activity throughout the South in the postwar era, largely due to the influence of these two national organizations with local affiliates. Primary source material for this study includes contemporary organizational records of the campus Ys at UNC and UT, as well as newspaper and other accounts of students' daily experiences.

Given that interracial gatherings were illegal in the South during the period of this study, archival evidence has occasionally been more difficult to find. Much of the evidence for the existence and importance of personal relationships across the color line therefore comes from the author's oral interviews with subjects. These interviews also proved useful for reconstructing the harrowing experiences of the first black students to desegregate college campuses, as well as the first participants of the NSA's "human

relations seminars;" intimate, biracial gatherings that were intended to break down the interpersonal barriers of racial difference in the South. The focus of this project is the connections between white and black students through national organizations and on formerly all-white desegregating institutions. It is intended as a starting point for a more comprehensive history of interracial Southern student activism.[31]

The activities of postwar American student organizations suggest an understanding of democracy as something not merely legislated or written about, but actually practiced—by individuals—on a daily basis. In an era when small acts of transgression against the color line were significant, this attention to detail and process has left an invaluable record of cultural and political evolution. The campus press renders an even greater collective archive, providing essential corroborative material and conflicting perspectives. As Eugene Schwartz, founding member and editor of a 1200-page NSA anthology observes, simply by looking at campus dailies it is possible to "tell the entire story of world events leading to, during, and following the war without any reference to the *New York Times* or other commercial newspapers."[32] But this story of

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31 Future revision of this study will include additional material from historically black colleges and universities in the postwar era. Excellent local histories include Joy Ann Williamson, *Radicalizing the Ebony Tower: Black Colleges and the Black Freedom Struggle in Mississippi* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2008); Turner, *Sitting in and Speaking Out*; Jelani M. Favors, "Black Women in the Ivory Tower, 1850-1954: An Intellectual History," *The Journal of Southern History* 75, no. 2 (2009): 470; Jelani Manu-Gowon Favors, "Shaking up the World: North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University and the Black Student Movement, 1960-1969" (Ohio State University, 1999); Jelani Manu-Gowon Favors, "Shelter in a Time of Storm Black Colleges and the Rise of Student Activism in Jackson, Mississippi" (Ohio State University, 2006).

32 Eugene G. Schwartz, *American Students Organize: Founding the National Student Association after World War II: An Anthology and Sourcebook* (Westport, Connecticut: American Council on Education/Praeger, 2006), 1148.

world events is viewed through student eyes, and woven together with an illuminating narrative of student action. By looking at both the college press and student government in tandem, a fascinating record of student concern and student activity emerges.

Important archival sources for this work include the records of the National YWCA in the Sophia Smith Collection at Smith College, records of the United States Student Association at the Wisconsin State Historical Society, the records of the NSA Southern Student Human Relations Project at the King Center in Atlanta, and various collections from the Center for American History at the University of Texas, the Emory Manuscripts and Rare Books Collection, and the Southern Historical Collection at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

This dissertation consists of two parts. The first describes the animating issues, organizations, and debates that framed student activity on the postwar American campus. Chapter One describes the revitalized student scene in the mid-1940s. It briefly recounts the student movement of the 1930s in order to contextualize postwar developments. World War II was a major catalyst for student interest in a wide range of issues, and the strain of idealism embodied in the vision of "one world" found a natural home on college campuses. Many students felt that by forging strong personal attachments with other students abroad, they could help strengthen the cultural and political ties among nations. A world of friends, many believed, would be less susceptible to another world war than a world of strangers.

In addition, the records of postwar student organizations demonstrate a widely shared fascination with the mechanics of democratic process, from document drafting to parliamentary procedure. The elaborate documents and bylaws of the National Student Association, as well those of student governments on campuses around the country, amply showcased students' sophisticated grasp of deliberative assembly. The last two

sections of this chapter survey the strands of internationalism and individual rights that ran throughout the debates and activities of student organizations, particularly within established campus organizations like campus YM/YWCAs and the NSA.

Chapter Two catalogs and compares the various kinds of activism that took place in and around major university campuses in the South, revealing the unfolding of an organic process of youth action for greater student rights to support for civil rights. During these years, students at UT, UNC, and other colleges and universities, engaged in conflicts over free speech, academic freedom, and administrative decision-making. From these exchanges emerged the concept of "student rights," through which American college students began redefining their own positions in American society—throwing off old notions of *in loco parentis* and exploring their potential as political actors.

The postwar era also witnessed a considerable expansion in the size, scope, and power of campus-based student organizations. It was student organizations, not university administrators, who first instituted study abroad, foreign exchange, and Model United Nations programs on American campuses. Student government and the college press became important venues for learning and practicing the arts of democracy. The leaders of these two student entities often viewed matters very differently. Even when they were in agreement, campus elections and newspapers provided a forum for dissent, and individual campaigns, letters, and student opinion pieces reveal as much about postwar student sentiment as any official resolutions of student government.

American students worked assiduously to reach out to other students beyond their own campuses. This was a national, and in many ways, an international phenomenon, but this chapter focuses on collaborations and the exchange of information that took place among student leaders in the South. It considers the unique challenges that Southern

students perceived for themselves and their region, and their prescription for improving the world around them.

The second chapter also describes the fractured nature of postwar college campuses, which became battlegrounds over not just what the rights of student should be, but who should have access to the university as a student. Education and student activities in the postwar South took on new significance and were politicized in an atmosphere charged by the prospect of impending change to the racial status quo. Because of the connection by some conservatives of support for racial equality with communism, the diverse offerings of NSA mattered less to some campus observers than the question of "which side of the line" the organization came down on in terms of race. This is reflected in debates on individual campuses over the question of NSA affiliation. Finally, the racial and gender ideologies of this period are considered in tandem as women and racial minorities fought for more equitable access.

Chapter Three examines the confluence of Southern students' international and domestic political concerns, including anti-colonialism abroad and desegregation. The student YM/YWCA served as the campus "home" for many international students, and as the center of discussion about international issues among postwar students. This chapter considers the ways that an awareness of the world, and the experiences of international students, shaped student resistance to segregation in the South. I argue that on postwar Southern campuses, the quests for racial harmony and international peace coalesced in visible and historically significant ways. For example, white Southern students organized charity events for international exchange students, with whom they hoped to forge lasting friendships. Campus social events pointedly excluded African-Americans, and highlighted the logical and moral incompatibility of global human rights and local segregation. For their parts, many African American students (including numerous

veterans of the war) refused to settle for second-class treatment and pay the "price of peace" on desegregated campuses. The confluence of these trends on large Southern campuses made them into spaces of uncertainty, tension, and possibility— quite a different atmosphere than what prevailed in most parts of the American South.

The second half of this study takes a more focused look at efforts to improve human relations through the Student Y and the National Student Association. Many southern students took part in racially integrated regional, national, and international Y and NSA conferences, which emboldened them to create similarly egalitarian spaces in their own communities under the aegis of human relations. Chapter Four highlights the historical importance of the Student YWCA in the South, and the tradition of racial liberalism that informed the immediate postwar era. Campus YM/YWCAs were bastions of progressive thought, and their internationalist and interracial perspectives provided a crucial framework for many Southern youth at formative periods in their lives. Student Ys became trendsetters for progressive activism, and many students participated in human relations seminars through the YWCA. These study groups offered Southern students opportunities to develop personal relationships across racial boundaries, and to discuss race relations with unprecedented frankness.

For many, human relations represented a deeply personal conversion experience, through which a new and more racially just society seemed possible. Chapter Five develops this analysis of human relations by examining the NSA Southern Student Human Relations Seminars, which began in 1958. These seminars recruited students into civil rights activities by fostering personal connections and using them to change both hearts and minds. This chapter highlights the importance of human relations as an approach to interracial student organizing, emphasizing similarities and differences with later civil rights activism. As both a concept and a method, human relations created the

framework for many postwar activists to envision changed social relations among black and white, male and female, American and international students. Its emphasis on forging personal connections, and its insistence on human rights for all individuals, created opportunities to break down barriers on a personal level and to relate to one another on the basis of a shared humanity.

Chapter Six examines human relations activities conducted with students through the YWCA in the late 1950s throughout the 1960s. It considers the YWCA "Special Project in Human Relations," including veteran organizer Ella Baker, and the efforts of young "campus travelers" who worked with her, including Casey Hayden, Mary King, and Roberta Yancy. This chapter considers the important intellectual and practical contributions of these women activists who consciously operated within the tradition of human relations. These women traveled throughout the region attempting to cultivate student leaders who would carry out human relations initiatives on campuses with fewer resources than flagships like the University of Texas or the University of North Carolina. Y practitioners created workshops and conferences in the region to overcome racial isolation and facilitate meaningful interactions between black and white youth. These time-intensive endeavors aimed to cultivate a sense of personal responsibility among students for desegregating campus life. Human relations seminars operated in an intensely interpersonal manner that prefigured the "consciousness-raising" of later women's organizations. The human relations work of Hayden and King is considered in conjunction with their developing analysis of the place of women within the movement.

The Epilogue connects the sit-in demonstrations of the early 1960s with student understandings of race and human rights from the early postwar era. It recounts the process by which a postwar internationalist perspective among college students matured and blossomed into distinct but related forms of progressive activism. I argue that the

animating spirit behind “thinking globally and acting locally” originates within this postwar student dialogue, and argue for a wider view of the term “activism” beyond public or direct action. I suggest further study of the experiences of the first black students who desegregated college campuses, and also the importance of human relations, a tradition that suggested a more broadly based freedom movement, predicated on a shared sense of humanity rather than racial affinity.

PART ONE: THE POSTWAR CAMPUS

Chapter 1: The Quest for One World: *The Revitalization of American Student Activism after World War II*

> If the nation foregoes the opportunity to solve the problems of its own land, to indulge in the lethargy of reminiscence, then the evils most dangerous to the nation will not be corrected. The war that was fought to put down the evils of the enemy may then prove to be a war that protected the evils and fostered them for the peace.[1]
>
> – Horace Busby, *Daily Texan* editor, 1945

In December 1946, the University of Texas at Austin student body president Jim Smith pitched the "Texas Plan" to over 700 American students gathered in Chicago. The student delegates represented 307 colleges and universities, and 28 national student groups from all across the country.[2] Jim Smith represented the University of Texas at this gathering of American youth over the winter break who met to discuss the prospects of forming a new national organization. Immediately after World War II, the American student community was fragmented, and the United States stood nearly alone with no representative national student organization to speak on behalf of students. The question up for debate was what form and function should the new organization take? Smith eloquently outlined the Texas delegation's proposal, which emphasized balanced geographical representation and unity of purpose among American students. The "Texas Plan" recommended several provisions that would guide the new national student organization. First, the student organization would focus exclusively on common issues of student welfare, rather than broader political issues. To prevent the possibility of a

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[1] Horace Busby, "Peace," *Daily Texan* (Austin, TX, August 19, 1945).

[2] Faye Loyd, "Shivering Texans Ramrod Chicago Meet," *Daily Texan* (Austin, TX, January 7, 1947).

small ideological group taking over the organization, Smith proposed that its membership be composed of student governments who affiliated voluntarily, and by extension all individuals of that student body, rather than by partisan political or religious student organizations. The organization would have regional officers and activities as well as national. Officers had to be students, and they could only serve one term.

A majority of students agreed with these unifying principles and endorsed the "Texas Plan" for the new organization, electing the charismatic Jim Smith as its new leader.[3] These broad outlines became the organizing framework of the United States National Student Association (NSA), which was formally founded by student veterans the following year. The manner in which Smith and his fellow student delegates conducted themselves as they formed a constitution, regional structure, and unifying aims for this new national student organization marked a seriousness of purpose among a certain class of American college students. Likewise, an emphasis on democratic process and collective identity informed many student endeavors and organizations during the postwar years. Older organizations like the Student Y witnessed a resurgence of student participation, and the youth councils of organizations like the NAACP expanded their ranks and worked diligently to build on the Double Victory campaign.[4] In addition to NSA, the nation's youth formed entirely new organizations such as the American Veterans Committee to advocate for progressive change.[5] All of these efforts signaled a

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[3] Faye Loyd, "Jim Smith Elected National Student President, Will Resign UT Post to Form New Group," *Daily Texan* (Austin, TX, January 7, 1947).

[4] Busby, "Peace."

[5] The student veterans who created the American Veterans Committee held intense organizational conventions in which they hammered out constitutions and common aims, akin to the process undertaken by students who formed NSA. The wife of an AVC member expressed disappointment that the organization was so

new era in American student action. College campuses became magnets for social and political ferment after World War II, as students began to seriously debate their rights and responsibilities as citizens of America and the world.

Yet even close observers of higher education often overlooked this shift in tone among students in the years after the war. While quick to note the obvious changes in campus life, including the mass enrollment of returning veterans, national media outlets were slower to jettison the carefree image of the social-minded "college kid," which had predominated up to, and even during, World War II. Even when news outlets did take the time to cover developments like the formation of NSA, condescension or amusement crept into the coverage.[6] Fewer still noted the more subtle currents of change on college campuses. Student expectations of educational institutions, and conceptions of their own roles within the university and broader society, were beginning to shift significantly. The influence of mature and serious-minded veterans extended beyond personal career ambitions. Students redefined their roles in many ways: through the assertion of academic freedom and student rights, discussions of the rights and responsibilities of students as citizens in the college press, and as they learned of implications for their actions in national and student international conferences. This process characterized

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serious and businesslike in its proceedings, working until late into the night to arrive at their platforms via Robert's Rules of Order, engaging in fierce democratic debates. She'd traveled with her husband to an AVC convention and remarked that it was a shame that it wasn't more of a social atmosphere, like the American Legion.

6 An important exception to this was the coverage of student action by campus newspapers, where much more detailed accounts of postwar student activity can be found.

student activity after World War II in ways that opened the doors for progressive change in the years to come.

World War II was a major catalyst for student interest in a wide range of issues, and the idealism embodied in Wendell Willkie's wartime vision of "one world" found a natural home on American college campuses.[7] Many students felt that strong individual relationships between themselves, their fellow Americans, and their counterparts abroad would strengthen diplomatic ties between nations. A world of international friends, they hoped, would be less susceptible to another world war. This chapter considers the revitalized American student scene in the mid-1940s in the context of patterns of student activity that preceded it. It explores overlapping networks that comprised a significant portion of progressive student activity in the postwar period. The most significant of these included established University YM/YWCAs and the National Student Association (NSA), both of which promoted individual rights and liberal internationalism in the 1940s.

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7 Though Willkie ran against Franklin Roosevelt as the Republican nominee in the 1940 presidential election, Roosevelt sent him abroad as an informal ambassador in the early 1940s. Willkie wrote of his travels and insights abroad in *One World*, wherein he described a world free of colonialism and imperialism. The United States, he argued would have to play a major role "in the creation of a world in which there shall be an equality of opportunity for every race and every nation. [W]e must win not only the war, but also the peace, and we must start winning it now." To win the peace, Willkie argued that America had to do three things: "first, we must plan now for peace on a world basis; second, the world must be free, politically and economically, for nations and for men, that peace may exist in it; third, America must play an active, constructive part in freeing it and keeping its peace." The United States would have to take the lead in ensuring postwar peace, he argued. "Other peoples, not yet fighting, are waiting no less eagerly for us to accept the most challenging opportunity of all history – the chance to help create a new society in which men and women the world around can live and grow invigorated by independence and freedom." Wendell L Willkie, *One World* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1943), 202–203, 206.

OVERVIEW: STUDENT ACTIVISM IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

During the first three decades of the twentieth century, colleges functioned as finishing schools for upper and middle-class youth whose families could afford years of credentialing. Through the early 1930s, American college life was largely apolitical, and students busied themselves with parties, Greek functions, athletic and beauty contests, and recreational activities as much as academics. This was the case even after the Stock Market crash in October 1929, as the majority of students were cushioned from the effects of economic depression for more than two years. In a national poll taken in the fall of 1932, over fifty percent of college students supported President Hoover in the upcoming election, whereas Franklin D. Roosevelt received under a third of the vote and the socialist candidate, Norman Thomas, received twenty percent. Student preferences tended to mirror those of their parents in each region; the South was the only region of the nation exhibiting a preference for Democratic candidate Franklin D. Roosevelt.[8]

1932 became a pivotal year in student awareness and interest beyond the campus. Hard times shook many American students from the apathy that had characterized college life since the late 19th century, as reductions in enrollments, shrinking endowments, and severe cuts in state appropriations changed the nature of higher education. In the South, academic programs for the most vulnerable – including the poor, women and African Americans – were cut back as many institutions struggled for survival. African American students were more likely than their white counterparts to work for their education, and without work they could not maintain their coursework. Due to declining enrollments and

8 Ralph S Brax, *The First Student Movement* (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1981), 15–16.

philanthropic donations, many universities consolidated during this time.[9] In Atlanta, Spelman and Morehouse colleges and Atlanta University created the "Atlanta University Affiliation" in 1929 to combine resources to serve the needs of women students, male students, and graduate and professional students, respectively. In other cases, a more complete consolidation took place. In Concord, North Carolina, Barber-Scotia College, the oldest institution of higher education for black women, consolidated with the all-male Johnson C. Smith College in Charlotte in 1932.[10] Public and private institutions of higher education for white students also underwent consolidations and budget cuts, and several Southern women's colleges admitted men, either on a temporary or a permanent basis.[11]

Although studies on the effects of the Depression on student attitudes are mixed, most contemporary studies indicated that students who attended college during the Depression years became more liberal in their thinking.[12] A change in consciousness caused many students to consider a range of political, economic, and social solutions, no matter what their previous political preferences tended to be. Historian Robert Cohen describes 1932 as the "dawn of a new age in American student politics."[13] Debate teams

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9 Amy Thompson McCandless, *The Past in the Present: Women's Higher Education in the Twentieth-Century American South* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1999), 180–181.

10 Ibid., 176–181. McCandless notes that after the consolidation movement in the depression, Bennett College in North Carolina and Spelman College in Atlanta remained the only two single-sex colleges for African American women in the country.

11 McCandless, *The Past in the Present*.

12 Brax, *The First Student Movement*, 14–17.

13 Robert Cohen, *When the Old Left Was Young: Student Radicals and America's First Mass Student Movement, 1929-1941* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 43.

and campus news writers took on controversial issues, and a significant number of students participated in organizations that probed national and international issues.

The student movement that emerged in the 1930s reflected greater concern for economic crisis, as well as the societal issues of war and peace, and civil liberties. The National Student Federation of America (NSFA) was founded as a confederation of American student governments in 1925, but it greatly expanded campus membership in the late 1920s and early 1930s.[14] The organizations that developed in the tumult of the 1930s comprised the first twentieth century student movement. They included the NSFA, the National Student League (NSL), the American Student Union (ASU), the Student League for Industrial Democracy (SLID), and the Congress of Youth.[15]

Though the emphasis of these various student organizations differed, their cumulative result was to awaken American youth to the political and economic implications of public policy, and to encourage activism on issues of both national and international scope. The student movement of the 1930s, which emerged mainly in the northern and western regions of the country, included a mix of young people who offered liberal, socialist, and communist solutions to the economic crisis. These students openly

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14 Edward R. Murrow served as the president of the NSFA from 1930-1932, reaching out to student unions from forty other countries. Murrow hosted a weekly radio show (his first) on CBS called "University on the Air," a broadcast that included prominent figures from college campuses and public life, such as Albert Einstein. Edward R. Murrow, "The 1930 NSFA Atlanta Convention: 'The First Time Negroes Ever Came In the Front Door'," in *American Students Organize: Founding the National Student Association After World War II: An Anthology and Sourcebook*, by Eugene G. Schwartz and United States National Student Association. (Westport, CT: American Council on Education/Praeger, 2006), 26–28.

15 For a detailed study of these organizations, see Cohen, *When the Old Left Was Young*.

debated and critiqued the merits of capitalism. But they also tackled social issues including discrimination and racism, and members of these organizations waged early efforts to combat segregation. A progressive stance on racial issues was one main reason these organizations gained little traction in the South.[16] A few notable exceptions to this included active chapters of the American Student Union at the flagship universities in Virginia and North Carolina, as well as campus membership in the National Student Federation of America at North Carolina State University, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Agnes Scott College, Purdue University, the University of Florida, Texas State College for Women, and the University of Texas at Austin.[17]

Antifascism was a key ingredient that bonded the 1930s student movement together, as did anti-war sentiment. In the early and mid-1930s, numerous polls taken of

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16 The University of Maryland opted not to affiliate with NSFA in 1934, after its delegate reported in January of that year that white Southern delegates asked black delegates to leave a social function at the annual convention. Though black and white students had participated in the conference sessions until this incident, the delegate stated that "the undercurrent of feeling reached a point where open clashes between Southerners and the Negroes were barely averted." The daily paper at the University of Maryland, *The Maryland Diamondback*, agreed with Maryland Student government president Fred Cutting that the racially integrated organization "must come down to earth" before it could be effective. The only solution, the campus paper wrote, was for NSFA to "organize into two federations with joint officers. Problems which confront the Negro students are far different from those facing the white students. The two should not be intermingled.…" "NSFA Convention," *Maryland Diamondback* (Baltimore, MD, January 8, 1934).

17 The presidents of UT and UNC, Dr. Homer P. Rainey and Dr. Frank P. Graham, were both on the NSFA's Board of Advisors. Other Southern universities were members of the NSFA; those mentioned had students that were either national officers or on the executive committee of NSFA in 1940. Cohen, *When the Old Left Was Young*; Eugene G Schwartz and United States National Student Association, *American Students Organize: Founding the National Student Association After World War II: An Anthology and Sourcebook* (Westport, Connecticut: American Council on Education/Praeger, 2006), 31.

American students revealed an overwhelming trend toward pacifism, and a belief that the United States should only enter a war if it was directly attacked. In a 1931 poll taken by the Intercollegiate Disarmament Council, over 90% of the 24,000 student respondents supported a worldwide reduction in armaments, while over 60% favored unilateral disarmament by the United States.[18] But developments abroad would bring the issues of antifascism and pacifism into greater focus. The emergence of the Popular Front in 1935 established the united effort against fascism as the highest priority among these student groups, and criticism of the Roosevelt administration's domestic economic policies (as being too conservative) appeared with less frequency after the middle of the decade.

Though communist students were a significant portion of the 1930s student movement, their influence was often obscured, a circumstance that would indelibly shape the postwar student movement. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, a sympathetic ally to youth throughout her life, took the concerns of student groups seriously and granted various degrees of support, high-level access, and protection, when needed. In the late 1930s, however, she inadvertently provided aid to communists and communist sympathizers who occupied positions of leadership in the Congress of Youth.[19] Whereas

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18 Brax, *The First Student Movement*, 16–17.

19 Communist students involved with the ASU and the Youth Congress intentionally deceived First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt about their affiliations, even as she came to their defense in front of the Dies Committee hearings in 1939 and praised them in her weekly columns. The communist leanings of these youth only became apparent after she went to the trouble to secure free housing for students attending a Citizenship Institute in Washington, D.C. Mrs. Roosevelt also ensured that both the attorney general and the president attended the event, which ultimately proved to be a hostile, anti-administration political gathering where she was booed. Robert Cohen writes that Eleanor Roosevelt was unaware that the communist students "had misled her. She admired them for their youthful idealism and social consciousness and saw no reason to doubt their honesty. Mrs. Roosevelt's

communist accommodation characterized the American student movement in the early 1930s, by 1940 the conflicts between communist students and noncommunist liberal student colleagues overwhelmed the movement. Disagreements that erupted between liberal and communist students after the Nazi-Soviet non-aggression pact in 1939 ultimately contributed to irreconcilable fissures. By the time the United States was attacked at Pearl Harbor in December 1941, most organized student activity in these organizations had ceased. The issue of communism that divided old allies in the 1930s student movement would reappear in the postwar era as anticommunist zeal and a fear of "fellow traveling" among liberal groups.

A GENERATION SHAPED BY WAR

A few groups managed to keep the flicker of student activism alive through the war years. Students associated with the non-communist Left, especially those involved with Christian and Catholic student organizations (including the Student YWCA), remained committed to the ideal of a unified student community. In 1942 and 1943, they organized through the American office of the International Student Service (ISS) and attended a worldwide conference with students from 53 nations. The ISS is sometimes described as a "wartime bridge" between 1930s and postwar student leadership and activism.[20] The ISS had four basic aims: to educate students on American democracy, to promote faculty-student collaboration in addressing the problems of democracy on

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boldness in challenging Dies, then, was coupled with a naiveté in trusting these Youth Congress leaders." Cohen, *When the Old Left Was Young*, 301–304.

20 Schwartz and United States National Student Association, *American Students Organize*, 50.

campus and in local communities, to foster international cooperation among students and scholars, and to aid student victims of "oppression and disaster."[21] During these meetings, American students made preliminary plans for the creation of a more representative American student organization to be developed after the war.[22]

In the 1940s, the war mobilization effort in the United States quickly replaced the issues that had animated the 1930s student movement, especially pacifism. American entry into World War II dramatically changed American society. Many college campuses received federal funds to create military training programs, and to revamp dorms, cafeterias, and housing for this purpose. In addition, the composition and number of students changed. Two million youth, mostly men, served in the armed forces, and campuses sought to fill vacant student seats with women applicants, resulting in an increasing proportion of female students on college campuses. Though the proportion was larger, the absolute numbers of women on campus declined, as male training recruits arrived there for newly assembled military training camps, and women left school for military and defense-related work or marriage.[23] The makeup of organizational activities signaled this demographic shift. At the University of Texas, a July 1943 headline indicated this shift: "Girls Predominate on [*The Daily*] *Texan* Staff, as Boys Go to War."[24] The next year, Helene Wilke became the first woman to act as editor of the

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21 The ISS also had Mrs. Roosevelt's blessing. "ISS Stimulates Student Interest and Activity," *Vassar Miscellany News* (Arlington, NY, November 15, 1941).

22 These meetings laid the foundations for the 1946 Chicago conference, and what would become the United States National Student Association in the postwar years.

23 Brax, *The First Student Movement*, 199.

24 "Girls Predominate on Texan Staff, as Boys Go to War," *Daily Texan* (Austin, TX, July 1943).

campus newspaper for an entire year; three more women would hold this position in the twelve years after her tenure. Sudden departures from campus were extremely common through the late 1940s; men left due to draft, voluntary enlistment, or on-campus military and ROTC programs. Women continued to end their studies upon marriage, but they also left for wartime work. As a consequence, a series of resignations and constant turnovers in student leadership were common. Between 1943 and 1948, at least two students served as president of the UT Student's Association each year, and in 1946-1947, three held the post. In March 1945, vice president Anna Buchanan became the first woman to serve as president of the UT Student's Association, when the acting president resigned for military service.[25]

The war also changed the scope of student interest. Youth serving in the military were making great sacrifices to ensure American freedom, and their companions attending universities in the United States became more attuned to a wide range of local and international issues that had implications for the war and the postwar world. First and foremost was the cause for which the Allied Powers fought - the effort to defeat fascism and make the world safe for democracy. Thus questions of freedom and democratic practice closer to took renewed form in campus conversations.

At the University of Texas, the Regents and Texas legislators had engaged in ongoing battles with progressive faculty and students since the mid-1930s, but these intensified during the war years. The issues of communism and racial equality sparked efforts to censure the campus newspaper and any university employees who spoke openly

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25 The *Daily Texan* reported that the male student elected to serve as vice president "bestowed an authoritative peck on Miss Buchanan's blushing forehead, to become the first boy in history to kiss a president of the student body." *Daily Texan* (Austin, TX, March 9, 1945).

in opposition to the conservative line. *The Daily Texan* published progressive articles about minorities and race in the early 1940s, but none so clear as a strongly worded editorial in 1943 which read, "Minorities have rights to full citizenship.…If we are to win the peace, we must first erase all traces of fascism in this country."[26] The editor, Bob Owens, published a subsequent editorial that likened America's handling of blacks with Germany's treatment of Jews. After Owens departure from UT for the Marine Corps in 1943, war propaganda replaced the editorial section for several weeks (Owens died in combat).[27] In the next two years, however, other UT students wrote articles condemning the race riots of white citizens against African Americans, and criticizing campus race restrictions. The Texas Student Publications board ordered the *Texan* to stop covering race relations in March 1945, but the issue would re-emerge in the national spotlight the following year when Heman Sweatt applied for admission to the UT law school.[28]

"Red scares" initiated by conservative legislators, including Congressman Martin Dies of Texas, periodically resulted in the denial of tenure and firing of liberal faculty through the 1940s. In 1943, a UT student wrote in praise of the Soviet government for eliminating various "sins" in Russia. These "sins" included "race differences" and the use of religion, which the student described as "an instrument of force and superstition used by the state on one hand and the church on the other to hoodwink and intimidate the common citizen." The editor of *The Houston Post* blasted *The Daily Texan* for anti-religion/anti-Americanism, and the Texas House of Representatives overwhelmingly

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26 *Daily Texan* (Austin, TX, February 6, 1943).

27 Tara Copp and Robert L. Rogers, *The Daily Texan: The First 100 Years* (Austin, Tex.: Eakin Press, 1999), 54.

28 Ibid., 55.

passed a resolution condemning the editorial. One regent wrote in defense of the paper, saying that the comments were understandable given the context of the article. He asked, "Must these young students, many of whom are making the supreme sacrifice to preserve the American way of life, be prevented from expressing their thoughts about any subject in which the entire American citizenship are vitally interested?"[29]

The issues of red-baiting culminated in a firestorm of student protest when the Regents fired UT President Homer Rainey in November 1944. Rainey had consistently shielded *The Daily Texan*, publicly scoffed at accusations of communism within the university, and steadfastly defended faculty rights of free speech and academic freedom. Nevertheless, the UT Board of Regents issued to Rainey a list of faculty members whom they wanted dismissed. Rainey refused to do so without cause. Instead, he called a meeting of the Faculty and laid out his charges against the Regents. Two days later, the Regents fired him. Five thousand students marched in protest, and the Texas legislature questioned Rainey about communists at UT and his beliefs on racial equality. In response, the university lost face nationally as the American Association of University Professors censured it, and the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools placed it on probation.[30] Thus, glimmers of tensions that would re-emerge in postwar years surfaced in wartime student debates, periodically reoccurring in dramatic form on college campuses.

After World War II, a generation of students that differed substantially from their predecessors flooded college campuses. The most obvious change was the sheer number of students, the majority of whom were veterans in the immediate postwar years, which

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29 Ibid., 54.

30 Ibid., 48–49.

universities across the nation struggled to accommodate. A change in demeanor was another feature that marked the postwar student cohort. Veterans brought a maturity and level of expectation to the classroom that diverged from the collegiate atmosphere of the early 20th century. Many expressed dissatisfaction with the ad hoc housing and inadequate level of instruction they encountered at universities.[31] Veteran students tended to be a few years older, were often married, and sought academic degrees that would translate into lucrative jobs. They performed much better academically than the generations that preceded or came after them, despite some administrators fears to the contrary, and they constituted the majority of male students in American universities from 1946 to 1948. Veterans swelled enrollments at the best universities in the country – the Ivy Leagues, the flagship public universities, and the better liberal arts colleges. In sum, 2,232,000 veterans attended colleges under the G.I. Bill, including 64,728 (2.9%) women.[32]

Though many veterans were on campus for a relatively short time, they changed it socially, as well. Psychologists found that college students after World War II were far less prejudiced toward minorities than were their predecessors.[33] Some veteran students expressed commitment to ending fascism and bigotry, and fought modes of campus

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31 Everett D. Dyer, "The Married Veteran at the University of Texas, 1947: A Study of His Problems as a Student and His Attitudes Toward Education" (MA, The University of Texas at Austin, 1947).

32 A March 18, 1946 *Time* magazine article asked, "Why go to Podunk College when the Government will send you to Yale?" Keith W. Olson, *The G.I. Bill, the Veterans, and the Colleges* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1974), 43–44.

33 G.M. Gilbert, "Stereotype Persistence and Change Among College Students," *Journal of Abnormal Psychology* 46, no. 2 (1951): 245–254.

discrimination, such as exclusionary clauses in fraternities.[34] The American Veterans Committee (AVC), an organization created in 1943 by World War II veterans, adhered to the progressive philosophy, "we fight for what we fought for." AVC college chapters emphasized the responsibility of the citizen-student, rather than the privileges of the veteran, and fought for equal educational and housing benefits for black veterans.[35]

A young Ronald Reagan was active in the left-leaning American Veterans Committee in the years immediately following the war. [36] Reagan served stateside in the Army Air Corps during the war. In 1948, he wrote a guest column in the AVC's *Bulletin* newsletter that championed the AVC's pick for a Minnesota Senate seat, mayor Hubert H. Humphrey. He blamed Standard Oil for inflation, and assailed Humphrey's opponent as "a banner carrier for Wall Street." In a program sponsored by the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Reagan praised Humphrey's record on "adequate low-cost housing, for civil rights, for prices people can afford to pay, and for a labor movement

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34 Alfred McClung Lee, *Fraternities Without Brotherhood; a Study of Prejudice on the American Campus* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955).

35 Charles G. Bolté, *The New Veteran* (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1945).

36 Bellush was an AVC member at Columbia University in the 1940s, served on the AVC National Board, and would become an American historian at City College of New York. Other members of the AVC that would become prominent leaders included Bill Mauldin, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr. , Oren Root, Jr., Harold Stassen, Will Rogers, Jr., Harris Wofford, Jr., Melvyn Douglas, Ralph Bellamy, Thornton Wilder, Cord Meyer, and Guy Tyler. Bernard Bellush, "The American Veterans Committee," in *American Students Organize: Founding the National Student Association After World War II: An Anthology and Sourcebook*, by Eugene G Schwartz and United States National Student Association. (Westport, CT: American Council on Education/Praeger, 2006), 707.

free of the Taft-Hartley Law."[37] Bernard Bellush, another AVC member, later recalled that Reagan "eventually discovered, however, that he was in the wrong pew." But Reagan's membership only underscores how broad-based AVC's appeal was; there were many active AVC campus chapters in the South.[38]

Though some veterans were on campus for academic degrees only, and not as interested in extracurricular activities as their non-veteran peers, many veterans engaged in political and social causes. They were, in many ways, a generation of "joiners," and believers in civic commitment.[39] Veterans groups organized all over the country, and at the University of Texas, student veterans formed an intercollegiate organization with twenty-three similar veteran's groups at other Texas colleges and universities to advocate for various policy measures, including increasing subsistence allowances.[40] Veterans envisioned the postwar world as one of great opportunity, but their experiences made them realistic. A 1947 study of married veterans at UT revealed that whereas veterans were "very interested" in national and international affairs, over 80% were either cautiously skeptical or had a lack of confidence in the "world outlook."[41]

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37 William E. Leuchtenberg, "Reagan's Secret Liberal Past," *New Republic*, May 23, 1983; Stephen Vaughn, *Ronald Reagan in Hollywood: Movies and Politics* (Cambridge, England; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 158.

38 Among others, the University of Texas, University of North Carolina, Georgia Tech, and many other campuses boasted AVC chapters.

39 Mettler, *Soldiers to Citizens*; Robert Putnam, "The Strange Disappearance of Civic America," *The American Prospect* (Winter 1996).

40 Dyer, "The Married Veteran at the University of Texas, 1947," 46.

41 Ibid., 134, 138.

But the influence of World War II was not limited to veterans. The young people who came of age during the war years had a sense of themselves as actors on a larger stage than their predecessors. And they brought to student organizations and college campuses a strong sense of purpose, discipline, and belief in democratic process. In 1948 Norman Francis came to New Orleans to attend Xavier University, a historically black Catholic school with a diverse, integrated faculty and student body. Francis, an African American from a French-speaking segregated town in Louisiana, likened Xavier to "a United Nations" because it contrasted sharply with the rest of the South. He remembered that "We had every color, every race, every creed."[42] But equally significant, he recalled, was the influence of former servicemen in the university. They were focused, experienced, some were married, and they were powerful models for 18-year olds like Francis. He recalled that "there was a maturity and a distaste for what it was they were experiencing" in the segregated South, "after having fought for their country and having seen their friends and even relatives die." Veterans were intent on getting their degrees, but "they had not abandoned their social conscience," he noted. "And many of them joined organizations that were quietly starting the desegregation process, or moving toward an integrated process."[43] Francis interacted with former servicemen on campus

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42 Norman Francis recalled the stark dichotomy of life at Xavier, where color was not an issue and everyone was "treated as a human being" and "totally American and a child of God on campus" with the segregated strictures of the surrounding community. "[W]hen we went outside, still being the same, we lived in another world that said we were not." Norman Francis, "Leadership in a Southern Black Catholic College," in *American Students Organize: Founding the National Student Association After World War II: An Anthology and Sourcebook*, by Eugene G Schwartz and United States National Student Association. (Westport, Connecticut: American Council on Education/Praeger, 2006), 431.

43 Ibid.

and especially through the National Federation of Catholic College Students, the Catholic Committee of the South, and NSA, all of which worked to create interracial student alliances.

In the postwar era, the overlap among student circles was considerable. A multiplicity of student organizations formed a progressive network of student activists, including numerous secular and religious organizations. The two most notable were the Student Young Men's/ Young Women's Christian Association (YM/YWCA) and the National Student Association. Both provided "free spaces," which were crucial to the development of student activism in the South.[44] The Y was a worldwide organization rooted in the Christian Social Gospel tradition, whereas the NSA was a secular confederation of student governments that represented the "voice" of American students nationally and in the international student scene. Though the origins of these student groups differed considerably, common themes can be found in the outlook of young people involved in them. The remainder of this chapter considers the Y and the NSA individually, and the influence of World War II and the emergence of the Cold War on students who became active in these organizations in the postwar years.

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44 Sara Evans and Harry Boyte define "free spaces" as "public places in the community….in which people are able to learn a new self-respect, a deeper and more assertive group identity, public skills, and values of cooperation and civic virtue…settings between private lives and large-scale institutions…with a relatively open and participatory character." Sara M. Evans and Harry Chatten Boyte, *Free Spaces: The Sources of Democratic Change in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1986).

THE STUDENT YMCA/YWCA

The Student YMCA and the Student YWCA were instrumental in campus activism in the United States dating back to the late 19th century. Student or Campus "Ys" were collegiate-only chapters of the national YMCA and the national YWCA, and they operated as distinct and separate entities, apart from community YMCAs and YWCAs, which catered to the needs of adults and families. Because most of these student chapters cease to exist today, it is important note the difference in function of community and student Ys during the early and mid-twentieth century. Community YWCAs resembled the downtown Austin YWCA, which housed several hundred young women in a dormitory, offered self-development classes, conducted community service projects, and also provided recreation activities for youth and local servicemen. One University Y member in Austin from the late 1930s recalled that the community YWCA had "always been a different sort of operation, they were the old classic YWCA….They protected young women from the evils of the world."[45] Student Ys catered to a different constituency, mostly college students who sought involvement and education, leadership experience, and interaction with other students.

The original Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) was founded in London in 1844 by George Williams and several other draper's assistants, although precursors to the YMCA can be found in Scotland, Switzerland, and Germany in the 1820s and 1830s. From the outset, the YMCA was very consciously an international organization, and the World's Alliance of YMCAs quickly organized to coordinate the

45 Helen Bounds interview with the author, Austin, TX, April 26, 2002, taped, in author's possession.

rapidly growing network of YMCAs in Great Britain, Canada, the United States, Australia, and France. The YMCA catered to the needs of working young men in a rapidly changing society during the Industrial Revolution. Likewise, the first Young Women's Christian Association originated in London in 1855 and quickly spread worldwide in similar fashion to the YMCA. The YWCA is the oldest women's membership organization in the United States, and part of a worldwide movement of YWCAs with a long activist tradition.[46] Since its founding, members of the YWCA engaged in social justice projects including domestic labor organizing and interracial cooperative activities. Both the national YMCA and the national YWCA began to sponsor student YM/YWCAs soon after their founding.

In 1857 the first collegiate YMCAs developed at the University of Virginia and the University of Michigan. Throughout the second half of the 1800s, Student YMCAs multiplied across the United States, becoming "the great fact in the religions life of the colleges."[47] Student YMCAs sought to "fill the religious and moral vacuum on the campus by relating religion in practical ways to the life of the student," focusing on

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46 The YWCA has historically had a much more activist orientation than the YMCA. Whereas community YMCAs in the twentieth century continued to stress character building and physical development of boys and men, community YWCAs typically devoted significant attention to the amelioration of social ills. Initially this activism took the form of a "maternalist imperative," but as the century progressed, it evolved into "broad and often bold conception[s] of the mandates of Christian democratic citizenship." See Elisabeth Lasch-Quinn, *Black Neighbors: Race and the Limits of Reform in the American Settlement House Movement, 1890-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 131. The history of the YWCA is discussed in greater detail in chapter four.

47 Clarence Prouty Shedd, *History of the World's Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations,* (London: Published for the World's Committee of Young Men's Christian Associations by S.P.C.K., 1955), 15.

campus-centered and service-oriented activities. But, since the late 19th century, campus Ys expressed such a great degree of interest in affiliation with like-minded groups from other schools throughout the nation and world that a 1955 study of the American Student Y movement noted that "it has been said that student religion is as intercollegiate as football."[48]

Student divisions of the YMCA and the YWCA formed independently, but on co-educational campuses they tended to operate jointly. As one study of the Student YMCA explained in 1960, "it is almost impossible to separate any one of the student Christian movements from any other."[49] The history of these organizations is interwoven with the social history of colleges and universities in this country, because on hundreds of college campuses from the late 19th century through the mid-twentieth century, Student YM/YWCA associations performed the social and administrative functions that would later become official student services adopted by the university administration. As quasi-official university organizations, they catered to the spiritual, social, and individual needs of students during a time when colleges and universities were limited mostly to academic functions. Thus, on countless campuses, the "first" housing office, student handbook,

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48 York Lucci and Columbia University Bureau of Applied Social Research, *The YMCA on the Campus* (New York: Columbia University, Bureau of Applied Social Research, 1960), 160.

49 The quoted study referred to the Student YMCA and the Student YWCA, as well as denominational student societies, and administration-supported voluntary student Christian organizations, which tended to operate in tandem with the Student YMCA. Ibid., 7.

freshman orientations, recreation or pool facilities, student employment office, study abroad office, etc., were created and operated by the student YM/YWCA.[50]

The student division of the YWCA became especially popular on college campuses beginning in the 1920s and 1930s, as it offered young women formal leadership opportunities that were rare in other organizations. Especially in the South, where women's roles were circumscribed in larger degree to the realm of religious concern, the YWCA broadened women's awareness of the world and was a crucial motivator and outlet for wider social and political consciousness. Three-fourths of college campuses in the South had student YWCA chapters, totaling roughly 210 chapters in 1945.[51]

The YWCA's embrace of the Social Gospel after World War I began a transformation in the organization's goals and orientation. The YWCA encouraged a vision of world connectedness rooted in Christian pacifism and the notion of universal brotherhood, which stressed personal responsibility and action to improve the lives of others, both locally and abroad. [52] The Social Gospel, known also as "social

50 This was common among colleges in the South, including the University of Texas at Austin and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

51 Frances Sanders Taylor, "On the Edge of Tomorrow: Southern Women, the Student YWCA, and Race, 1920-1944" (PhD, 1985), 8.

52 Susan Lynn's work focuses on women involved with the YWCA and the American Friends Service Committee between World War I and World War II. Lynn explains, "Each generation of social reformers builds on and modifies the legacy it inherits from the previous generation. For the women who joined the YWCA…during the interwar decades…the Social Gospel and Christian pacifism were the major wellsprings of moral passion. These women activists supported the specific accomplishments of the New Deal, but their reform goals ranged far beyond…to envision a new world based on human love and community, with social justice and equality for all and cooperation between nations. Lynn, *Progressive Women in Conservative Times*, 38.

Christianity," emphasized the importance of incorporating Christian notions of brotherhood into daily relationships.[53] The national YMCA also adhered to the message of the Social Gospel. In this effort, the YMCA sent many men abroad to work in locations across the world in an effort to improve lives and build spiritual community. Women involved with the YWCA in the interwar years were concerned with problems of poverty and exploitation of the industrial workforce, international tensions that might lead to war, and racial inequality. The vision of universal equality espoused by Social Gospel adherents stood in direct contrast to conventional religious teaching. The implications of this opposition, however, were more fully explored during the World War II era, as students expressed the need to improve domestic conditions alongside a newfound sense of world responsibility.

Belief in the Social Gospel, in conjunction with the YWCA's attention to gender and race-related discrimination in labor, directly informed the Student YWCA agenda, which was always more progressive than the Student YMCA.[54] The YW influence tended to radicalize the joint YM/YWCAs. This was due in part to the fact that the national YWCA was more directly involved in the Student YWCA, allocating funding directly to collegiate chapters from the national YWCA, whereas Student YMCAs

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53 Taylor, "On the Edge of Tomorrow," 8.

54 The University Y in Austin assisted women in labor organizing in pecan factories in Texas during the 1930s. Much scholarly attention to the YWCA is centered on their extensive labor organizing efforts. See Mary Frederickson, "Citizens for Democracy: The Industrial Programs of the YWCA," in *Sisterhood and Solidarity: Workers' Education for Women, 1914-1984*, ed. Joyce L. Kornbluh and Mary Frederickson (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984).

derived their funding from community membership drives. But the youth divisions were also generally more supportive of progressive change than parent organizations.[55]

The operations of the YM/YWCA at the University of Texas, known collectively as the "Y," serves as a useful window into the activities and concerns of progressive students on southern campuses in the twentieth century.[56] "Block" Smith, a decorated World War I veteran, spent time in Siberia working on a YMCA project before beginning his position as adult advisor to the University of Texas YMCA in 1921. Smith remained a guiding force at the UT student Y until his retirement in 1956. He was an eloquent proponent of the Social Gospel and a primary advocate of interracial activity at the Y. Smith supervised an exchange program in the 1920s that brought Mexican students to the University, which he recalled, provoked "complaints from all over the place," including white male boarders who resided where the Mexican students stayed, who initially

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55 Jodi Vandberg-Daves recounts that this is partially due to the constant resistance YWCA members lodged in order to retain their separate institutional status. The question of a merger between the two organizations in this time period re-occurred due to the significant financial resources of the YMCA and also the desire of the YMCA board to draw females into their organization. As co-educational interaction became popular, the YWCA became a direct competitor for young women's membership, yet many YWCA leaders feared that such a merger would mute women's voices and opportunities for leadership. See Jodi Vandenberg-Daves, "The Manly Pursuit of a Partnership Between the Sexes: The Debate Over YMCA Programs for Women and Girls, 1914-1933," *The Journal of American History* 78, no. 4 (1992): 1324–1346.

56 The Student YMCA and YWCA at the University of Texas were known collectively because they organized activities together, but the two organizations were in fact separate entities that consistently maintained joint and equal leadership positions between men and women until 1969, when a single executive led both, due to financial constraints. Other campuses with similar joint YM/YWCA's included the University of California at Berkeley, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and Duke University.

complained that they would have to share bathroom facilities.[57] Smith later oversaw a Y program (even before UT integrated its undergraduate classes) that invited prospective African American students to UT for an orientation including a tour, meeting with professors and administrators, and social gathering with current students.

The Student Ys embrace of the Social Gospel and the perception of the University Y as a secular political entity prompted conservative critiques beginning in the early twentieth century. Controversies tended to bolster participation from a wide swath of participants. Y members often touted the secular nature of Y programming in order to draw a distinction with its programming and the role of traditional Christianity in maintaining, rather than challenging, segregation and backward social mores in the South. Indeed, some churches and the more traditional Austin community YWCA and YMCA often distanced their organizations from the controversial political perspectives espoused at the University Y.

The UT University Y was known for the diversity of ideas espoused by both guest lecturers and student participants, and provoking controversy early in the organization's history due to the discussion of liberal positions on race and foreign policy. The anti-war work of some Y members in 1914 drew the first pointed criticisms of the organization, as did early Y efforts toward racial integration. In 1916, the Y initiated informal discussions between white UT students and blacks from the two African American colleges - Sam Huston and Tillotson (which later merged) in Austin. Conservative daily papers attacked the Y for inviting George Washington Carver to speak there in 1930 after university

57 Morris, "Institution Under Fire - Living Theology; Smith and the 'Y'."

officials barred him from lecturing on campus.[58] Former student and Y member Bill Fielder recalled that during the "furious '40s, the 'Y' again received criticism when it invited an economics professor to speak on the effects of over-spending" by the federal government. During the lecture and discussion, the professor's comments clashed with conservative students who depicted the incident as an officially endorsed critique on the U.S. economic system. "The subject became misinterpreted and state-wide protests were hurled against the group," Fielder recalled.[59] Such controversies tended to bolster student participation.

Helen Bounds, a San Antonio native who was an active University Y member in Austin from 1935 to 1939 and board member in the 1950s, recalls that the Y attracted students equally for its social opportunities. She met a fellow student who would become her husband at the freshman orientation held by the Y in 1935, a story that was not uncommon. Although conservative students did participate in Y activities, and many more students were participants rather than actual members, the general perception of the Y was decidedly to the left of the political spectrum. Students were motivated out of "rather general, broad, social, political, economic concerns." She explains that during the late 1930s:

> [These were] the late days of the depression, when there was a good bit of questioning… of our economic situation…there was a good bit of interest in the Russian experiment, in its early days when it was considered to be perhaps a

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58 "Public Service Announcement for the University YW-YMCA: 20 seconds" (Austin, Texas, n.d.), Box marked: "Y Funds Before 1973, Finance Campaign, Endowment Fund," File: "Finance: Campaigns Joint YW (Misc.), 1937-1960, University of Texas YWCA Archives.

59 Jimmy Hyatt, "Panorama Focuses On: The University 'Y'," *Daily Texan* (Austin, TX, May 15, 1960).

> promising thing, and the Y was sometimes criticized as…leaning towards Communism. Also during the McCarthy period [and] in the late 50's, the Y was considered to be radical, by the more conventional conservative churches for example, the Y was considered kind of far out. They weren't sure this was religion; religion shouldn't be concerning itself with such matters.[60]

Throughout the postwar era students interested in current events and world affairs attended the University Y's popular "Faculty Firesides" program.[61] Boasting weekly attendance rates of over 1000 student attendees from assorted fraternity and independent living groups, topics for this program ranged from the role of China in the world economy to Texas politics to discussions of popular fiction.[62] Faculty members from various disciplines acted as instructors for the program, which provided a venue where they could discuss their personal philosophies and interests outside of the more restrictive campus setting.[63]

The perception that the Y was a center for leftist and even radical politics increased as it became the center for international students who enrolled at the university. Long before an official study-abroad office existed at UT, the University Y encouraged foreign exchange trips and became the hub for students from other countries. The Y

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60 Helen Bounds interview with the author, Austin, TX, April 26, 2002, taped, in author's possession.

61 The "Faculty Fireside" program was initiated by the University Y in the 1920s.

62 During the 1940-1941 school year, the Y claimed a participation rate of 1200 students in 20 fraternities and 20 boarding houses" in the weekly "Fireside Forum" program. Seventy-two faculty presented during the same year. In "Ten Reasons Why the 'Y' is Worthy of Your Support" (Austin, TX, 1940), Box marked: "Y Funds Before 1973, Finance Campaign, Endowment Fund," File: "Finance: Campaigns Joint YW (Misc.), 1937-1960," University of Texas YWCA Archives.

63 Faculty involvement in and support of the Y is indicated in the large-scale participation and also in the form of annual financial contributions, which began to dwindle in 1960.

created programs especially for international students, including social events and off-campus outings to places such as a Texas ranch or a small town. Whatever the motivation for attending Y functions, the emphasis on free exchange of ideas and experiential knowledge was a consistent theme.

By the 1940s, students at the campus Y freely debated social and economic concerns, but the end of World War II prompted new kinds of discussions about citizenship and student responsibilities. "Block" Smith explained the process of change that led to support for race equality during his thirty years at the Y:

> The Second War probably did more to improve things on that than the First War. A good many of our youngsters, going to all parts of the world, began to get an understanding of what other people were like.
>
> War, it's a hellish, un-Christian thing. The churches didn't do much. Our churches prayed for the Allies, and their churches prayed for the Germans. I don't know, I may be getting old and cynical. But I don't want to live through any third world war…through the years the Y has picked up young people who had reacted against the churches, who had stopped going to church. I think the greatest satisfaction I have in life is looking back at the people who went through the Y and came out with something. I can name you scores of young people who came there and helped learn the dignity and worth of a human personality.[64]

Smith identifies the shift in attitudes on race more specifically to the World War II era, when a new internationalist awareness transformed ideas of national purpose alongside domestic race issues. Smith's assessment of the UT Campus Y mirrors the evolution of opinions printed in national Y publications. The national YMCA/YWCA magazine, *The Intercollegian,* contains scores of student articles that combine the activist message of the Social Gospel with the experiences of World War II. These writings

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64 Morris, "Institution Under Fire - Living Theology; Smith and the 'Y'." In response to a question about the ways that members of the University Y in 1962 might be different from earlier generations, Smith replied, "Human nature hasn't changed."

indicate new perceptions of social equality, among blacks and whites, Americans and foreign citizens. Moreover, an emphasis on what Smith calls "the dignity and worth of a human personality," rather than theology, indicates an earlier trend among students toward the kind of Christian existentialism associated with the civil rights generation of the 1960s.[65]

While World War II encouraged a more humanistic approach to difference among some, it also inspired new notions of citizenship. The monthly reading, lecture, and discussion topics sponsored by the UT student Y in 1944-1945 are indicative of this trend. These subjects have in common an assertion that the United States and its citizens, as leaders of the free world, would have to tackle anew issues such as race, gender, class, and economics, as well as world peace and government. Two months of debate were devoted to "The Evolution of Democracy," during which time Charles Beard's The Republic was the focus of conversation. Students also discussed "An Experiment in Democracy- The T.V.A.," Gunnar Myrdal's An American Dilemma, "Medical Care for Us All," "The Post-War Position of Women in the U.S.A.," "World Peace in the Hands of the Senate," and "International Cartels."[66] This assortment of domestic and international concerns is significant because it is clear that the role of the United States as a probable victor nation emerging out of World War II was very much in the minds and discussions of Y members. Students anticipated the need for significant changes to take

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65 Here I agree in part with historian Douglas Rossinow's description of the influence of the Student Y in Austin, but argue that the influences of the Social Gospel and Christian existentialism that he highlights in the late 1950s and early 1960s were at work much earlier in the postwar period.

66 "Yearbook of the University Y.W.C.A. Board, 1944-1945," file - President's Book, Received by Helen Bounds from Helen Flinn, June 1948, box - Archives, '50's - 80's, University of Texas YWCA Archives.

place in American society in the realms of race and gender relations, among others, in order for democracy to withstand the pressures of maintaining world peace.

At the end of World War II, youth from all over the world began to re-connect, and to report on the developments and conditions at universities in various countries. College newspapers from this time period give the impression of a student world with lights finally turned back on after a wartime blackout of information. In 1945, the World's Student Christian Federation (WSCF), which linked the student YWCA and similar student Christian groups in many countries, raised relief funds and resumed student exchanges, one of their primary functions before the war. They fielded inquiries from students in countries who sought "an interpretation of what has been happening….elsewhere during the years when no communications have been possible." The WSCF had held informal round-robin conferences during the war under the theme "Thinking Ahead as Christians." These meetings took place in North America, Great Britain, China, Switzerland, Argentina, and India. At each, students from both "spared" and "suffering" countries were eager to gain insights from each other. The WSCF reported a "spontaneous deepening conviction" among students regarding the necessity of common faith and purpose during postwar reconstruction. "The student world begins to see that the hope of preventing a third world war is found in the fact of the World Church… Race war, economic war, political war are checked by the ethic which grows out of Christianity; the experience of Christian community across the lines of war and race is convincing proof of this."[67] This sense of common purpose also translated into something of a national test to some American youths, who viewed the tasks of maintaining the peace in the postwar era as both patriotic and moral imperatives.

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67 Hellen Morton, "The Great Road Ahead," *World's YWCA Monthly*, March 23, 1945.

Many students were optimistic about the new international role of the United States, but a theme of anxiety and concern is evident in student Ys across the country as they considered the disastrous possibilities if Americans failed to reconfigure old notions of domestic and international responsibilities after the war. The worldwide work of both the YMCA and the YWCA informed these discussions. One article on the question, "Will America Grow Up?" appeared in the national YWCA magazine in January 1946. The author appealed for international cooperation, especially increased Russo-Western understanding following the war. These discussions, especially among Y youth, also reflected a changing ideology that explored the global implications of social equality. One American YWCA youth, on duty in Paris during World War II, voiced this view in a letter she wrote to her home chapter, published in the "Youth Speaks" column:

> You say that things are in a worse muddle at home than here [in Paris]. I wonder. I don't think we can nationalize it to that degree. The world is in a state of unparalleled confusion: We are not helping the situation… We are a strange people, we Americans, we rely so completely - with such a blind, childlike faith - on our industrial strength and that nebulous political state called 'democracy' to see us through any mess. This time it almost didn't work and next time it won't work - because there will be other industries equaling ours and other ideologies with more realistic 'meat' in them against which we shall be lost.
>
> 'The war is over and we all go home now' - we gripe because the ships don't take us home faster… Home to what? Unemployment? disquiet? the need for strikes? race riots?[68]

The idea that the problems of unemployment, racism, and class struggle in the aftermath of World War II could not be "nationalized" or effectively dealt with in isolation is a recurrent theme in national Y literature. The fear of another world war was often conflated with the specter of domestic race or class war in Y activists' rhetoric. The

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68 Barbara Craig, "Letter from Paris, 1945," *The Women's Press (The National Magazine for Young Women's Christian Associations)*, January 1946.

sense of world connectedness, world responsibility, and the need to improve domestic conditions in the United States are expressed in a way that indicates that not only are these three linked, but failure to address them together may result in disaster at home and abroad.

The Y's internationalist orientation during World War II intensified as East/West global divisions deepened in the late 1940s and throughout the 1950s. Lectures and activities with themes including race and disarmament took place in response to the emergence of the Cold War. More revealing, however, is a recurring section in the national student YM/YWCA publication, *The Intercollegian*, that bore the heading, "We are a World Movement." Monthly articles in this section highlighted the work of YW/YMCAs all over the world, as well as the inter-related nature of the struggle for social equality. The four-part national program objectives adopted by the National YM/YWCA in 1947 reinforced the new international emphasis ushered in by the Cold War. These include: World Relatedness, Social Responsibility, Personal and Campus Affairs, and Christian Heritage. An analysis of these new priorities asserted that "Economic justice is impossible without basic changes in personal relations, without political action, and unless issues are dealt with on a world-wide scale. Enriching personal relations are thwarted by racial prejudice, economic barriers, and misunderstanding between men and women."[69] Among students at the Y, the postwar re-envisioning of social justice was discussed in both a local and international context, and in conjunction with needed changes in both race and gender relations. During and after the war, increased attention to race and gender disparity is evident in student Y

69 "Circle Sets Pattern for National Program Objectives," *Intercollegian*, March 1948.

discussions, as editorial letters selected for publication in newsletters were often written from young women, including African Americans, who were discriminated against in war industry jobs.

Many believed that the new postwar world would require new roles for women, and new relations between the sexes. This viewpoint is explained at length in relation to economic justice in a national Y magazine article entitled, "Where Do We Go From Here?," which included a detailed map and analysis of the migration trends of whites and blacks during the war. The author emphasizes the new post-war role women would have to play, especially in urban areas, to assure peaceful de-mobilization. The fear of repeat-riots and violence similar to that which followed World War I is expressed at length throughout this issue. The article explored the numerous ways for women, especially, to ease competition for services, housing, and transportation in urban areas.[70]

The emphasis on male and female partnership in the context of global responsibility is a theme that gains momentum during the Cold War. A student officer of the YMCA admitted in 1946 that it was not always easy to work in tandem with the Student YWCA, but cooperation between the sexes was necessary because "The problems we face today are so complicated, and so gigantic that they call for the united efforts of all individuals who are willing to put their shoulders to the wheel....This means that men and women must learn to work together…World forces drive us to do together what cannot be done separately."[71] A national student YWCA officer echoed this

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70 Craig, "Letter from Paris, 1945."

71 Eleanor French, "What We Have Learned from the Men," *The Women's Press (The National Magazine for Young Women's Christian Associations)*, February 1946 edition.

sentiment, asking rhetorically what topic - race, economics, or foreign policy - might be addressed better by only one sex. She concluded that the single topic suited for women-only was woman's roles.

Both local and national Y publications in this period asserted that domestic changes would be absolutely necessary in a postwar America, but their coverage implied that racial inequality was a more pressing than gender relations. Indeed race prejudice is identified as the "Achilles heel of Anglo-American war efforts" in a 1943 article in the national Y magazine. The piece, entitled "Color-Line: Battle-Line" argues that Y youth must redress their views on race because "the attitudes of their elders convulse the world scene." The mostly-white audience of the magazine (as well as the whiteness of the author) is indicated with the subsequent acknowledgement:

> We may not like the boiling up of a new self-consciousness and alarming restlessness on the part of non-whites -- peoples that we need as comrades in the frightful war against totalitarianism. Perhaps we deprecate today's trend. But it is surging high. Pearl Buck, astute commentator writes, 'If we persist, then we are fighting on the wrong side of this war. We belong with Hitler…Democracy if it is to prevail at this solemn moment can do so only if it purges itself of that which denies democracy, it has to act as it believes.'[72]

Thus, while a global perspective increasingly characterized University Y programming, it was paired with a growing concern with racial issues on the home front. The resonance of the "Double Victory" strategy that African American civil rights activists promoted during and following World War II is evident in the (albeit uneven) self-articulation and attention paid to it by the majority-white progressive University Y organizations.

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72 Harry L. Kingman, "Color-Line: Battle-Line," *Intercollegian*, November 1943.

After the war a shift from labor and economic problems to a concern for race inequality in American communities emerges in the context of an increasingly internationalist perspective at the Student Y. The language in Y publications indicates a heightened sense of urgency to old social problems due to the changes wrought by war. In 1946, an article on job discrimination explained the problem accordingly: "Discrimination, on grounds of religion, race, color, we have always had with us, even though it has recently cost the world 20 million lives and has thrust two great empires into the depths of material and moral defeat…" Adjoining this article is a photo of an African American G.I. and an African American female USO worker. Under the headline, Mobilize for Democracy," the magazine relays the message from an African American solder, who wrote from overseas that "A Different American is coming home, and he expects to find more of this democracy he's been fighting for."[73]

The framing of race relations within a context of global concerns is a consistent theme in University Y newsletters, personal accounts, and national publications dating back to the 1920s. Most striking in these documents is a discourse of equality rooted in an internationalist perspective that intensified during and after World War II and informed University Y activities in the period leading up to the civil rights era. The

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73 The article expands on this idea: "But will he?' we ask ourselves. Service men and women, who are already members of minority groups, are returning home less ready to accept injustice and unequal opportunity after experiences in a war to preserve and extend the principles of freedom and equality." "Mobilize for Democracy," *Woman's Press (The National Magazine for Young Women's Christian Associations)*, January 1946.

rhetoric and goals of the University Y leaders and participants in the 1940s and 1950s reveals that the experience of World War II and the onset of the Cold War fueled evolving notions of equality, among women and men, minorities and whites, citizens and foreign students. Central to these notions of equality was a concept of the liberal social gospel, which fostered an often secular-leaning environment where these leaders participated in and formulated their thinking about change for society. The connection between early Cold War concerns by postwar student activists and local struggles for racial equality is one consequence of the re-envisioning of citizenship, social justice, and national priorities that occurred during the postwar era.

THE UNITED STATES NATIONAL STUDENT ASSOCIATION

The fragmentation of the American student scene after World War II became an obvious obstacle to American student leaders who attended a series of international student conferences, most notably the August 1946 assembly of the soon-to-be International Union of Students (IUS). An official delegation of twenty-five American students, representing different regions and student organizations, attended this unprecedented international student gathering in Prague.[74] Among the U.S. delegation was Joseph Malik of the University of Texas, Jimmy Wallace of the University of North Carolina, students representing the YM/YWCA, and the Catholic Students organization. The IUS formed at the 1946 international student conference ostensibly to address issues of the international community that were relevant to students. One American student

74 One additional student accompanied the U.S. delegation of students to the August 1946 founding IUS conference in Prague as an observer.

leader recalled that the "left-wing nature" of the IUS was obvious, "[y]et it seemed very important that we cooperate with the Soviets for the sake of future stability and peace. We acknowledged their tremendous sacrifices made during the war, their crucial role in winning the war, but we did not want to be co-opted by left-wing undemocratic forces."[75] A major drawback for the American youth who attended the conference was that they could only speak for themselves as individuals, whereas representatives from Russia, Czechoslovakia, France, Britain, etc. spoke on behalf of the students of their nation, as official delegates of their national student unions.[76] And though Americans accepted invitations from other national student associations (e.g. Russia) to visit their country on expense-paid friendship trips, they had no such organizational or governmental infrastructure with which to return these invitations. Furthermore, the American delegates were ill-prepared to debate with their international counterparts, who were much more unified in purpose and in many cases, "party line."[77] Russell Austin, the U.S.

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75 Alice Tibbetts, "Organizing the U.S. Delegation to Prague," in *American Students Organize: Founding the National Student Association After World War II: An Anthology and Sourcebook*, by Eugene G. Schwartz and United States National Student Association (Westport, CT: American Council on Education/Praeger, 2006), 69.

76 Even when students represented national student unions, the delegate selection process and the meaning of that representation varied.

77 Through participation in Pax Romana, the international Catholic student organization, the Catholic students in the American delegation had more direct knowledge of communist efforts to influence youth organizations. Consequently, they were the most conservative and anticommunist of the American delegation. Their mentors warned them in advance of the Prague conference of various Soviet "tricks" and methods to dominate the gathering. For example, the Soviet delegates tended to host banquets with rich food and endless vodka toasts the night before important votes. It was impolite to refuse a toast, so students unfamiliar with this tactic could easily be thrown off their game the next day. The communists knew how to discretely empty their vodka into a nearby plant or receptacle. Sometimes they

delegation leader, wrote from Prague that the Americans were determined to form a national organization upon their return, because they had witnessed "the power and prestige they possess and the importance they give to the student in the life of his country" in the European nations.[78]

These international circumstances prompted American students to quickly organize a mass meeting of students in Chicago in December 1946. As relayed in the beginning of this chapter, Jim Smith from the University of Texas presented the "Texas Plan," to the convention, which became the framework for the United States National Student Association (NSA). Smith was elected president of the National Continuations Committee, which would formally convene NSA at a Constitutional Convention held in Madison, Wisconsin, in 1947. NSA became the largest student organization in the country, hosting annual congresses of delegates from between three hundred and four hundred colleges and universities who met to discuss campus and world affairs. As a confederation of student governments, each year the student government of a university would decide to affiliate, maintain membership with NSA, and send students to its national conventions, or to disaffiliate. This number fluctuated, but by 1958, membership

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would have two groups; one who ate and drank heartily, and one who went to bed and was up early for the political work of the Congress. At the end of the 1946 Congress, Catholic student Edward Kirchner recalls the lead Russian delegate asking him, "Who are you? You are obviously either a former Communist or you have been trained by them." Edward J. Kirchner, "Preparing the Catholic Delegation," in *American Students Organize: Founding the National Student Association After World War II: An Anthology and Sourcebook*, by Eugene G. Schwartz and United States National Student Association. (Westport, CT: American Council on Education/Praeger, 2006), 77.

78 Russell Austin, "Letter from Prague," *Chicago Maroon* (Chicago, IL, October 11, 1946).

totaled 372 schools and over a million students. The perks of membership included leadership training and access to a vast student news network that informed students about the happenings on campuses throughout the United States and in many foreign countries. [79] By the mid-fifties, NSA's travel abroad services were also a popular means for students, most of whom attended universities with no formal study abroad office, to travel the world.

The "Texas Plan" that charted the outlines of the National Student Association in 1946 emphasized ways of involving college students in national and international issues. The key element to this structure was the participation of individual students, beginning at the local, campus level. UT student body president Jim Smith hoped that the development of a common platform would enable American students to avoid "the possibility that we may be successfully "Red-baited."[80] As the first official face and voice of this national student organization, Smith wrote to a supportive dean back in Texas that NSA would be "progressive, undoubtedly, but it will be progressive in the field of student needs and student welfare rather than partisan political or religious fields." Smith presided over the construction of a constitution written "with the aim of perpetuation of a united student front on the general problems facing students in their functions and activities as students." It called upon "strong, democratic student

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79 Farabee, *Making It Through the Night and Beyond*, 80-81.

80 Smith envisioned the new organization of students "along the lines of the Bar Association, the American Medical Association, or the AAUP." He attributed his successful election as the top officer to "the general appeal of the 'Texas Plan' and the effectiveness of our delegation in convincing the various delegates of its merits." Jim Smith, "Letter to Dean Nowotny", January 5, 1947, *Dean's files*, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, UT-Austin.

governments" to be the "backbone" of the new organization, which would be both campus-wide and nationwide in its scope of student concerns.[81]

The (nominally) non-partisan and consensus-oriented qualities of the NSA reflected lessons learned from the failures of earlier student movements.[82] But they also spoke to the ambition of a new generation of students to stake out a claim for themselves in public life, and to assert their individual and collective rights as students on campus and beyond. As a generation who had already borne the weight of total war, postwar American college students began to transform their classrooms to reflect their thoroughly "adult" experiences. Specifically, many began to question the *in loco parentis* model that placed administrators and professors positions of near-parental authority over students, and to insist upon their full rights as citizens.

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81 Jim Smith, "A Call for a Strong Student Body," *Chicago Maroon*, April 11, 1947.

82 The group's selection of UT's Jim Smith as Chairman indicated the preference of the majority for a moderate leader. Smith described a power struggle at the conference between Communist and Catholic students. He wrote of various attempts to "influence the recent Conference along non-student interest, the possibilities of future control of the permanent organization to divert it into political or other narrow channels….In my opinion the Communist students came to the Conference with the principal objective of supporting anything which they would term progressive. The Catholics came, I believe , to oppose strongly any attempts at leftist domination, and to promote their own specific views with regard to the IUS [International Union of Students]." The majority of the "radicals" opposed his candidacy, he observed, but they were outnumbered by anticommunist Catholic students, who endorsed it. Smith assessed the situation and the other elected officers as such: "The radicals probably doubted my impartiality, and favored the University of Chicago delegate to Prague, Russell Austin. I do not believe that he is strongly influenced by either faction. He was unanimously elected vice-president. John Simons, a Catholic leader from Fordham, is our treasurer, and Cliff Wharton, a brilliant Negro student at Harvard, is secretary. Wharton is a YMCA man, and fully as neutral as either Austin or myself from my brief observation." Smith, "Letter to Dean Nowotny."

The preamble to the NSA constitution drafted in spring 1947 spoke to this ideal of equal citizenship rights for students, asserting that students should have access to higher education without regard to "sex, race, religion, political belief or economic circumstance." Southerners at the 1947 Constitutional convention foresaw the difficulty that an openly anti-segregationist NSA platform would bring to their efforts to convince their schools to join. Thus, in a "statement from the Southern delegates concerning educational discrimination in Southern states," they appealed to the convention for patience and the construction of careful constitutional language reflecting a gradual approach to desegregation.[83] "At the University of Texas," they explained, "a two-night performance of Carmen Jones did more toward creating respect and understanding for the Negro race than a year of speeches and argument possibly could have accomplished…."[84] After quite a bit of debate, the principle of racial equality, while a stated aim of the organization, was endorsed as an "eventual" goal, and thus did not curtail membership of student governments whose campuses where legally segregated.

Smith credited the willingness of African American delegates to compromise on an unequivocal stance against segregation "in order to obtain the participation of [white] Southern students in the temporary and future" as the "greatest single contribution to the success of the conference."[85] Thus while NSA championed nondiscrimination in higher education, it did so quietly. Despite such deliberate attempts to construct a student union

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83 The Constitutional proceedings do not indicate any great discussion over the implications of equal access to both sexes.

84 USNSA Constitutional Convention Program & Report, 1947-1948, *United States Student Association Records*, Wisconsin Historical Society, University of Wisconsin at Madison.

85 Smith, "Letter to Dean Nowotny."

that could withstand the great differences of its membership, NSA would continue to face charges of communist leanings because of its liberal stances on desegregation.

Nevertheless, enough Southern universities participated in NSA national and regional programs that student leaders in the region made important ties through the organization. Student government records and student newspapers reveal that Southern schools which were not affiliated with NSA routinely sent observers to the national conventions, but more importantly, they sent campus delegates to NSA regional programs. Students on campuses affiliated with NSA might have noticed its growing influence in a number of ways. NSA provided national and regional support to student activities, created institutional ties with more established student organizations such as the student YM/YWCAs, and (often in tandem) built concrete infrastructure and social space for students seeking to expand their collective influence. NSA recognized that individual student governments remained the most effective means to protect and expand student rights, but their efficacy varied considerably. Constant turnover in leadership often meant that institutional knowledge was lost every few years.

To combat this problem, in 1948, NSA began holding annual training institutes for newly elected student government heads, male and female. These annual conferences trained student leaders in proper democratic procedure and methods, providing a measure of standardization and professionalization that accorded legitimacy to student authority, and established sustainable cultures of student self-governance on individual campuses. University affiliation with NSA was only possible if individual student governments chose in favor of membership, but even schools not affiliated with NSA accepted the practical utility of the annual NSA Student Body Presidents Conference. So a diverse assemblage of newly elected student government presidents from member and non-member universities attended these institutes routinely.

Beginning in 1957, NSA brought fifty campus editors together for a similar annual Student Editorial Affairs Conference (SEAC). NSA extended this news network with regional conferences which included over a hundred editors, who met to discuss common issues such as interference from administrators and student government, and practical strategies for operating a successful campus paper. *Daily Texan* editors Bud Mims and Rob Burlage created a national SEAC newsletter that highlighted violations of academic freedom at American universities, and reprinted selected outstanding campus articles.[86] All of these efforts served to publicize student actions and to create a sense of student awareness and unity in the nation.

In addition to NSA student government president and campus editor training institutes, a much greater number of Southern students participated in regional "clinics" on these nuts and bolts issues, and later, on human relations. The NSA student regional chairs (Virginia-Carolinas region, Texas-Oklahoma region, Deep South region, etc.) encouraged non-members to attend these conferences, which focused on practical student skills. There were 400 colleges in the South, and NSA regional chairs hoped to attract a cross-section of them, regardless of philosophy or student makeup.[87] By improving

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86 Burlage (who married fellow UT student and YWCA/SNCC activist Dorothy Dawson Burlage, mentioned in Chapter 6) would work with Tom Hayden and Al Habor through NSA to form Students for a Democratic Society. Johnston, "The United States National Student Association," 245–247.

87 For example, when NSA Regional Chair and UNC student Ben Jones sent out invitations to the 1949 NSA "Carolinas-Virginia" regional conference, he invited white and black schools, coed and single-sex colleges, as well as state-supported and religious colleges, ranging from historically black all-women Bennett College to segregated, evangelical Bob Jones University. Box 1, folder "William E Mackie, President October 1949-March 1950," in the *Student Government of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Records #40169*, University

student leadership in the region, they hoped, Southern students would collaborate on the most important issues affecting them. Ideally, additional schools would also seek NSA membership, which would connect the South to the rest of the nation and make the national organization more representative of American student opinion. Even (and perhaps especially) for those schools who did not officially join NSA, these regional programs created much-needed opportunities for cross-regional and interracial contact among Southern youth.

In October 1949, UNC Student Government president Bill Mackie assessed the impact of NSA membership on his school in the *Daily Tar Heel*. Mackie described the various activities that UNC was involved in due to NSA affiliation, including foreign travel, a purchase card program, educational evaluation, faculty evaluation, clinics on student government, and "exchanges of ideas with other schools." [88] He emphasized, however, that "miracles" in student affairs only occurred with "gradual growth, complete knowledge of goals and methods, and a real willingness to learn from and cooperate with others." He noted student effort in "resolving problems of discrimination, segregation, and prejudice," came through NSA's influence, as well as a "more universal outlook of student government." The most important benefit of NSA membership, he argued, was "a feeling of the place of the student in the world, and of Carolina's student government in the wide area of education." He concluded that the cost of NSA membership was

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Archives, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. (Hereafter cited as "*UNC SG Records*.")

88 William Mackie, untitled, but labeled "On being Asked for Statement by *Daily Tar Heel*," October 1949, box 1, folder "William E. Mackie, President October 1949-March 1950," *UNC SG Records*.

"worth infinitely more to the students, the [UNC] administration and the United States in its relation with other parts of our somewhat split One World...."[89]

From the outset, however, the two most difficult issues that hampered American students in their quest for "One World" were how to deal with international communism and domestic racial inequality. In the immediate postwar period, many students argued that NSA needed to engage with communist students through the newly formed International Union of Students (IUS), in order to compete with them for the allegiance of young leaders from the developing world. They hoped the IUS would become a student version of the United Nations. More conservative students tended to oppose affiliation with the IUS at all, such as students from Catholic universities. Similarly, many Southern delegates opposed affiliation due to the well-known communist critiques of racial segregation. Student governments at flagships like the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the University of Texas at Austin fielded questions from other universities throughout the South as to the advantages and disadvantages to affiliation, and the real "nature" of NSA. Despite challenges, UNC stayed firmly within the NSA camp. UT went back and forth.

As one of the more prominent NSA affiliation battlegrounds, the debates over affiliation in Texas provide a snapshot of the clashes that took place at numerous colleges throughout the South. The key roles of UT students in the formation of NSA did not

89 By1949, UNC had paid $2250 total in dues and travel costs for NSA membership and activities. William Mackie, untitled, but labeled "On being Asked for Statement by *Daily Tar Heel*," October 1949, box 1, folder "William E Mackie, President May 1949-March 1950," *UNC SG Records*.

stave off fraught debates about their own campus's affiliation with the organization.[90] American students, including those at UT, were split on whether to boycott the IUS altogether, or attempt to represent American interests by reaching out to students from developing nations and those countries under communist control. The majority of students who comprised the University of Texas delegation to the 1947 NSA Constitutional Convention disagreed with NSA's decision to provisionally associate with the Russian-dominated International Union of Students (IUS), the largest student assembly in the world. Harold Barefoot Sanders, Jr., a member of the UT delegation, remembers that their position "was strictly pragmatic."[91] He recalls that Texas students "believed, and events proved, that any kind of connection with the IUS would be harmful on the campus when we tried to affiliate with NSA." Faced with dissension from his own school, Jim Smith was outraged. The UT delegates "had a rather unpleasant session" with Smith, whom they "all had a high regard for," but didn't think that he understood

90 UT student Joseph Malik served in the American delegation of students at the 1946 international student conference (at which the IUS formed) that returned to the United States with the convinced in the necessity of a national student organization. UT Student body president Jim Smith's victorious "Texas Plan" provided the structure for NSA in 1946, and he took a leave of absence from school to serve as the new national organization's president and to personally preside over the writing of its constitution in 1947. In addition, UT student Leo Goodman won office as the first-ever NSA chairman of the Texas-Oklahoma region in 1947.

91 Sanders' given name was Harold Barefoot Sanders, Jr.; he always went by his middle name. Sanders, a Democrat, served for six years in the Texas legislature from 1953-1959. He worked to pass the Voting Rights Act of 1965 as deputy attorney general under President Lyndon Johnson. He served as a United States District judge for three decades, most notably overseeing the desegregation of Dallas ISD from 1981 to 2003.

what a hot button issue the communist connection would be in Austin, according to Sanders.[92] They were right.

The subsequent affiliation battle that took place on the University of Texas campus in 1947 would set the tone for many that would follow throughout the South for almost two decades. Sanders campaigned for NSA affiliation, but conceded that it "was hard to sell as to what it could really do for the University."[93] The main issue, which Sanders remembers as a "phony" one, was the alleged communist influence of the IUS on NSA. In advance of the campus-wide referendum, the *Daily Texan* published a three-article series on the subject, including a reprint of the NSA constitution, and a page devoted to the arguments for and against NSA affiliation. Those against NSA tarred it because of its openness to the IUS. They objected to the "blank check" that NSA would have by claiming all students as members from affiliated universities, rather than soliciting individual student members. The Anti-NSA Committee at UT also took issue with NSA's stance in favor of racial equality:

> NSA claims liberalism because it favors racial equality. But will agitating help or hinder solution of our racial problems?
>
> Did you stop to think how typically left-wing this appeal on the basis of racial equality is? Don't all communist organizations paint themselves as saviors of

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92 Barefoot Sanders, "A Hard-Fought Texas Affiliation Battle," in *American Students Organize: Founding the National Student Association after World War II: An Anthology and Sourcebook*, ed. Eugene G. Schwartz (Westport, CT: American Council on Education/Praeger, 2006), 995.

93 Barefoot Sanders interview with David Goldstein, February 11, 1983, Dallas, TX, transcript in David Scott Goldstein, "The Student Government Experience at the University of Texas at Austin, 1932-1933 to 1982-1983" (Senior Honors thesis, The University of Texas at Austin, 1983), 287.

> minority rights? Then when their philosophy triumphs, what happens to ALL rights? There's no need to answer that one.[94]

The immediate postwar years witnessed a predilection on many college campuses with constitutions, revising constitutions, and ensuring that those constitutions enabled true democratic process.[95] UT even instituted a unanimously approved 20-question exam on which all officeholders had to score at least 80% correctly, derived from a list of 100 questions about the UT constitution.[96] Thus, it comes as no surprise that the Anti-NSA Committee immediately found fault with the NSA Constitution. "You'll notice," they wrote, "that the national [NSA] group can do anything not prohibited by the constitution, AND NOTHING IS PROHIBITED." Local chapters, it claimed, could not act in a way that conflicted with national NSA policy. They warned that this meant that "New York and Chicago can tell you what you believe, and so far as your local chapter is concerned, you can't question their statement." Their final criticism centered on the expense of affiliation; it would cost $1500 a year for the UT student body to affiliate. Anti-NSAers claimed that the only tangible benefit would be a subscription to the NSA newsletter,

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94 "The Pro and Con of the NSA," *The Daily Texan*, February 12, 1948.

95 The student government of the University of North Carolina revised their constitution in 1945; in the 1940s the UT student government debated and voted on constitutional revisions and amendments numerous times. Dozens of universities in the South sent requests to these schools asking for a copy of their constitution to consider as they revised their own.

96 This prerequisite for office-holding stood until 1960.

which they claimed NSA supporters had not circulated so that students wouldn't know how radical NSA really was.[97]

Sanders wrote an article supporting NSA affiliation, but it was not enough. The UT student body voted 2,533 to 1,874 against affiliation with NSA in what was described as a "heavy" turnout in February 1948.[98] Sanders won the office of student body president the following year, but despite his efforts, UT was not an NSA member. In 1983 Sanders recalled that NSA in the late 1940s was "thought to be a pinko type organization." He added that "the University was not really scared of pinko-type organizations – I mean, the campus was not a 1950's 'blah' campus, it was very activist – but there was just enough of a scare raised about the unknown."[99]

NSA tried to resolve the question of the "unknown" regarding its connection with the International Union of Students very soon after its decision in 1947 to tentatively affiliate with the IUS "as a means of developing international friendship."[100] A NSA delegation of American students, including UT's Jim Smith, ascertained the impossibility of working with the Soviet-dominated IUS at its annual convention in Prague in February

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97 "The Pro and Con of the NSA," *Daily Texan*, February 12, 1948.

98 "NSA Rejected, 2,533-1,874 in Heavy Vote," *Daily Texan*, February 19, 1948.

99 Barefoot Sanders interview with David Goldstein, February 11, 1983, Dallas, TX, transcript in Goldstein, "The Student Government Experience at the University of Texas at Austin, 1932-1933 to 1982-1983," 286–287.

100 "Summary of Official Minutes of all Plenary Sessions, August 24, 26, 27, 28, 1948 and of National Executive Committee Meetings, August 29, 1948, First National Congress, United States Student Commission, University of Wisconsin, August, 1949," box 1, folder "Jesse Dedmond, President, NSA June 1948-April 1949," *UNC SG Records*.

1948. During the conference, the Czechoslovakian government's coalition between communists and social-democrats unraveled. Czech communists dissolved the Czech national union and expelled non-communist students and professors from its universities. Over 10,000 Czech students marched in protest, and Smith and his American student colleagues witnessed their brutal repression, including at least one fatality, and over a hundred arrests.[101] Smith resigned in protest from the delegation, disgusted by the silence and tacit approval of the IUS on the incidents.

When Smith returned to the United States, he shared his great disappointment about the prospects for a cooperative relationship with the IUS. He felt that the intentions of the IUS leadership and Americans regarding international friendship were not in sync. He had hoped that they could work toward peace together "by creating an understanding and good will that would exist in spite of political beliefs," but it was obvious that the IUS leadership believed that "only the program of Communist parties is the program of peace."[102] Smith's colleague Bill Ellis, who served as the American vice president of the IUS, also resigned. Ellis charged the IUS with betraying "the trust and principles of all freedom-loving students" and showing "allegiance to the Machiavellianism of the

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101 Conflicting reports indicated between one and nine student deaths. Gert van Maanen, *The International Student Movement* (The Hague: International Documentation and Information Centre, 1966), 57–58.

102 "Summary of Official Minutes of all Plenary Session, August 24, 26, 27, 28, 1948 and of National Executive Committee Meetings, August 29, 1948, First National Congress, United States Student Commission, University of Wisconsin, August, 1949," box 1, folder "Jesse Dedmond, President, NSA June 1948-April 1949," *UNC SG Records.*

communist students." He decried the IUS for its disregard of numerous violations of student freedoms in Soviet bloc countries, and its tendency to describe the "present world crisis" as a conflict between imperialist (American, English, French) and democratic (communist) forces. NSA voted to disaffiliate with IUS, and worked to create a democratic international union of students as a competitor organization to IUS.[103] This incident marked the end of the initial postwar idealism that youth of the world could work together unrestricted by ideology. The international Cold War among students had begun.

Though NSA brought Southerners into closer contact with youth from elsewhere, southern members continued to appeal to the organization to tread lightly on the issue of segregation. The UNC student delegation to the 1949 NSA conference circulated a statement that affirmed their commitment to "the abolition of racial discrimination in all forms throughout the entire United States," arguing that it was "unacceptable in relations among human beings," and undesirable both educationally and economically. Since students were not yet the lawmakers of society, however, they had to work "within the bounds of our legal and cultural environment" to bring segregation to an end. Great progress had taken place in just three years, they asserted, as African Americans were beginning to gain entrance to "so-called 'white'" Southern schools and a vast change in opinion had occurred among white students. "Three years ago," they wrote, "any student

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[103]Katherine Paget, "From Stockholm to Leiden: The CIA's Role in the Formation of the International Student Conference," *Intelligence and National Security* 18 (2003): 134-167.

expressing sentiments opposing segregation was immediately relegated to the campus graveyard." They explained that since that time, "the atmosphere has so changed," that both the student government and NSA conducted interracial meetings routinely on the UNC campus. The delegates were working to "acclimate student opinion" to the admission of black students, but they warned that the region, which they acknowledged was predominately prejudiced, would react negatively to outside pressure. The changing of laws and further interpretation by the Supreme Court would help, they asserted, but segregation "can best be solved by southerners working in the South…"[104]

The UNC delegation letter pointed out that discrimination took place all over the country, and NSA should attempt to keep the South, however backward it may seem, within the fold so that the region would be exposed to "more progressive situations and thinking." Taking a dig at their northern colleagues, they argued that "[t]he South should not be forced regarding race, any more than Harvard should be forced regarding an honor system." In conclusion, the UNC delegates requested a "rational and sympathetic approach to the racial problem in the South."[105] Southern moderates would continue to appeal for acceptance of gradual change in the area of desegregation, in order for southern white schools to maintain their participation.

Although NSA largely adhered to a moderate approach to integration, impromptu groups of southern students waged periodic attempts to quit NSA. This took place even

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104 Statement of UNC delegates to the 1949 NSA Congress, box 1, folder "William E Mackie, President May 1949-March 1950*), UNC SG Records*.

105 Ibid.

in schools that remained steadfast members, like Agnes Scott, a white women's college in Decatur, Georgia. In 1949, NSA delegates elected Ted Harris, an African American student from La Salle University, as president, a move which pushed the race issue to the forefront. The student editorial staff of the campus newspaper, the *Agnes Scott News*, took a firm stand against NSA membership, warning that the college would suffer financially and psychologically if it supported an organization that "involved inter-racial meetings" and had selected a black student to lead it. As a practical matter, the editorial page pointed out that Georgia law forbade any interracial meetings including eating, drinking, or socializing. It also prohibited state-supported schools from holding interracial meetings at all. The newspaper focused on the consequences on "Southern patrons" and the current college fundraising campaign, predicting that "[t]he one thought that will be predominate in conservative Southern minds is the fact that Agnes Scott is a member of an organization that does not believe in racial discrimination."[106] But the paper ran opinion pieces from both sides of the issue. One supporter saw NSA as a way to break free of campus boundaries and face the real issues that awaited students after graduation. Another student wrote to thank the newspaper for stating the objections to NSA so unabashedly (after a 3-2 editorial vote) so that students could make their own judgments.[107] The student body voted in favor of NSA membership by a 2-1 margin.

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106 "News Stands Against NSA," *Agnes Scott News*, May 11, 1949.

107 Letters to the Editor, *Agnes Scott News*, May 18, 1949.

The prevailing thinking among Southern liberals, voiced in many venues, assumed that ending racial discrimination required a shift in hearts and minds, not just court mandates or policy changes. NSA adopted this viewpoint, and like other organizations at the time, devoted an increasing emphasis in programming to human relations as a way to combat racism and to build networks among like-minded students. The second portion of this dissertation recounts more specific human relations initiatives, but the concept of human relations informed the entire mission and goals of NSA. NSA originated in the context of postwar idealism and the belief that American youth should interact and organize democratically, and that by doing so they would be able to represent themselves within the nation and the larger international student community and bring about a more stable, peaceful, and unified world. The organization expressed its ideals in language purposely reminiscent of the United Nations Charter and Roosevelt's "Four Freedoms." They valued human rights and viewed the twin strategies of protection of individual rights and an internationalist foreign policy as the best way to achieve them.

It is this internationalist, and often idealist foreign policy approach that often provoked charges that NSA was too far to the left, or even a "fellow traveling" group. Although NSA disavowed the IUS in 1948 and won the endorsement of every president in the postwar era, Democratic and Republican alike, pitched affiliation battles took place routinely on Southern campuses. Liberal students hoped NSA would link them to the nation and world, whereas conservatives condemned the organization's comparatively

liberal stances on race, federal education funding, and internationalism.[108] Often, elements from outside the campus community (such as national fraternal organizations) financed anti-NSA media. At the University of North Carolina, one student political party ran on a "Get out of NSA" platform in 1951, while UNC's Allard Lowenstein served as NSA president.[109] Lowenstein, a native New Yorker, attended UNC in large part because of his admiration for the university's liberal president Frank Porter Graham, an ardent supporter of free speech and NSA. But as the notorious 1950 North Carolina Senate race illustrated, conservative race-baiting tactics often grossly distorted the positions of southern liberals like Graham.[110] Likewise, Lowenstein's charismatic

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108 *Daily Texan* (Austin, TX, August 25, 1959).

109 John Sanders to Shirley, February 23, 1951, box 1, folder "NSA - John Sanders November 1950 - April 1951," *UNC SG Records*.

110 Frank Graham, known as "Dr. Frank," was a beloved figure among the state's college students. Aside from serving as history professor and president of UNC, he served as president of the consolidated UNC system (which included the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Woman's College of Greensboro, and North Carolina State University) created by the state in 1932 to cut costs. Since his own student days he served as a leader and advisor to the Student YMCA, which put him in contact with youth throughout the region. Progressive governor W. Kerr Scott appointed Graham to fill an open U.S. Senate seat in 1949. When Graham ran for proper election in 1950, young radio announcer Jesse Helms engineered a smear campaign on behalf of Graham's Democratic primary opponent Will Smith which painted Graham as a racial extremist in favor of "mingling of the races," highlighting his participation on Truman's Civil Rights Commission in 1948. One campaign flier depicted Graham's wife dancing with a figure that looked like a cross between a black man and monkey. Another flier read, "White People WAKE UP before it is too late…You might not have another chance…." It listed ten ways in which whites and blacks might interact as social equals if Graham were elected Senator, and asked, "Do you favor this – want some more of it? If you do, vote for Frank Graham." Conservative colleagues in the Senate spoke in his defense, but Graham lost 49% to 50% in the

leadership garnered national attention, which perhaps emboldened segregationist Tar Heels to make it clear that he did not speak for them.[111]

The controversy over NSA affiliation acted as a cipher for postwar anxieties in general. Ray Farabee, a UT student who served as NSA president in 1956, recalls that although NSA membership levels increased during his tenure as president, the issues of communism, desegregation, and federal aid to education elicited considerable opposition in the South. He witnessed this firsthand at Baylor University and Southern Methodist University (SMU).[112] The student governments of both colleges expressed interest in NSA membership in 1955, and Farabee, a Texan, visited them to consult with administrators and students. Although the Baylor student government was in favor of affiliating, Farabee discerned quickly that the administration opposed the organization due to NSA's stances on desegregation and federal aid to education.[113] Baylor

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runoff, and spent the remainder of his life working for the United Nations on conflict resolution. See Warren Ashby, *Frank Porter Graham, a Southern Liberal* (Winston-Salem, NC: J.F. Blair, 1980); John Ehle and Charles Kuralt, *Dr. Frank: Life with Frank Porter Graham* (Chapel Hill: Franklin Street Books, 1993); Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Defying Dixie: The Radical Roots of Civil Rights, 1919-1950* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2008).

111 For more on Allard Lowenstein, see William Henry Chafe, *Never Stop Running: Allard Lowenstein and the Struggle to Save American Liberalism* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1993).

112 Farabee, *Making It Through the Night and Beyond*, 80–81.

113 Farabee met with the Baptist Student Union (BSU) chaplain, who repeatedly described Baylor as "conservative," though he insisted that it did not "have moss on its back." The chaplain recounted the biblical story of Philemon and his slave Onesimus "seemingly as a rationalization for segregation within the context of

administrators informed him that the trustees would veto any student action to join NSA. This would, they argued, be the worst outcome for all parties involved. When a group of conservative students took up the administrative charge in the newspaper, Farabee remembers that "we realized our efforts at Baylor had no chance of succeeding."[114]

At Southern Methodist University, the majority of the student government and the administration were in favor of NSA membership. In fact, during his visit, Farabee stayed as a guest in the home of the SMU president, Dr. Willis Tate. But a well-organized group of conservative students launched a ruthless anti-NSA campaign before the campus-wide referendum. The national offices of fraternities and sororities wrote to Greek students, who were the majority at SMU, and advised them to vote as a block against affiliation because of NSA's opposition to discriminatory clauses based on race or religion. Farabee saw hammers and sickles painted on doors of NSA supporters, and banners over fraternity houses that read "Vote No NSA." Farabee, who was also a "fraternity man," was dismayed.[115]

Christian love and forgiveness." Farabee remembers that in a conversation about desegregation and race relations, the SMU "Provost used the term 'nigger' and 'nigra.'" Ibid., 96.

114 Ibid., 96.

115 Farabee wrote back to the national NSA office in 1956 that "Two girls who wrote an article in favor of the NAACP received a box with 2 red roses [with a note] that stated, 'Two red roses, for two pink ladies, who are too liberal for this campus.'" Farabee, *Making It Through the Night and Beyond*, 97.

Farabee attended an SMU student forum held the night before the vote, which quickly turned into a "horrific" anti-NSA rally.[116] Disturbing student comments that he recorded in his diary included, "I don't want my children to be taught by communists & that's why I'm voting against NSA." A female SMU student commented to the chair of the Student Union: "You're for NSA, you must have Negro sex appeal." In this environment of red and race-baiting, campus supporters for NSA resorted to defensive and ineffective measures such as printing a banner that read "NSA IS NOT COMMUNISTIC." The final vote was 500 in favor, 1000 opposed.

The correlation of NSA with racial change only intensified as NSA stepped up its support for desegregation through the late 1950s. The student body at the University of Texas at Austin voted twice to disaffiliate between 1948 and 1953. UT re-affiliated in 1954, but in 1959 the UT Student Association again recoiled from the organization, placing it on campus probation for its "lack of flexibility," and "precocious delving into the national and international realms of government."[117] When NSA provided coverage and assistance to the sit-in demonstrations in 1960, the Mississippi and Georgia

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116 In 1956 Farabee described the event in a report to the national NSA office, writing "Crowd was overwhelmingly opposed to NSA and every time a candidate spoke against it [NSA], there was much shouting, whistling & applause. Joe Scott, Editor of the *Campus* [student newspaper], wore one of the anti-NSA "Vote No" cards; as he was recognized, he pointed to the card and then put his thumbs down, and there was even more shouting & applause." Ibid.

117 *Daily Texan* (Austin, TX, September 25, 1959).

legislatures enacted laws which forbade their state universities from affiliating with NSA. Others simply applied pressure until student governments withdrew their membership.[118]

A supreme irony of campus controversies over NSA membership, however, is that while conservatives attacked it as being too far to the left and even communistic, the CIA covertly funded NSA beginning in the early 1950s, specifically its international division.[119] The vast majority of American students knew nothing of this secret government funding through front foundations, and most were shocked to learn of it, years later. The international division of NSA operated semi-autonomously from its domestic programming. Housed at Harvard, the International Commission had little connection with the day-to-day NSA activities that students participated in within the United States. Many former students who were active in NSA felt deeply betrayed when they learned of the secret government funding, as student independence and autonomy from the government and other influences were a point of pride for NSA members.

This dissertation focuses primarily on the activities and networks of Southern youth within the United States, only a few of which had knowledge of CIA funding. The

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118 Chapter Five describes the difficulties that NSA supporters in the South encountered as NSA became openly critical of segregation, voting to endorse the sit-ins and offering assistance to the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) through the NSA Southern Student Human Relations Project.

119 Farabee writes in his memoir with sad amusement that he was not able to get Texas schools like Baylor and SMU to affiliate with NSA because of the Red Scare in the 1950s. Yet, in 1967, after the CIA-link revelations in *Ramparts* Magazine, SMU finally voted to become an NSA member.

issue merits consideration, however, for several reasons.[120] Due to similar experiences such as the incidents Jim Smith witnessed in Prague, and later, the Hungarian student revolt, a small cadre of NSA leaders (usually no more than two at a time, the NSA president and the international commission vice president) in the 1950s and early 1960s viewed anticommunism as important enough to accept the invitation of the CIA to fund their democratic efforts abroad. The government recognized NSA's international activities as a significant method of waging the "cultural Cold War." It funded many other projects for the same reason, until President Johnson ordered the discontinuation of the policy in 1968.[121] NSA officers and former officers "in the know" about the secret

120 Though the total numbers involved in NSA's international work were much smaller, the organization's international relationships were more extensive. NSA historian Angus Johnston notes that "Six of the eight organizations listed on national office letterhead as "associated" with NSA at the time of the 1961 Congress were international in focus, covertly linked to the CIA, or both." The exceptions were the American Council on Education and the National Scholarship Service and Fund for Negro Students. Johnston, "The United States National Student Association," 288.

121 In 1958, former NSA officers introduced Gloria Steinem to their CIA connections, who ultimately funded the Independent Research Service, a foundation that employed her full-time and sent Americans to World Youth Festivals. Steinem spent two years in India after her graduation from Smith College and returned convinced that Americans needed to participate in World Youth Festivals. She recalled, "I came home in 1958 full of idealism and activism, to discover that very little was being done." The Soviet Union funded youth from all over the world to attend the festivals, but there was no counter to Soviet propaganda because no one from the United States did the same. In 1967 she recalled, "Students were not taken seriously here before the civil rights movement, and private money receded at the mention of a Communist youth festival." Steinem saw no contradiction in the CIA funding arrangement. Most of the Americans who went were liberals and leftists. "Far from being shocked by this involvement," she explained, "I was happy to find some liberals in government in those days, who were far-sighted

CIA funding referred to each other in half jest as those who were "witting." Even though very few NSA people were "witting," there was something of a revolving door between NSA leadership and later employment with the CIA and related government agencies, where anticommunist liberalism predominated. [122] Ray Farabee, NSA president from 1956-1957, explains the arrangement with NSA as such:

> I had some communication with persons, either hired by the CIA or connected with it; but they never controlled or influenced national policy. As to international policy, we were on the same page; we were seeking to counterbalance the IUS and to present truths about such events as the Hungarian Student Revolt and suppression of academic freedom for students and faculty, whether in the Soviet Bloc, South Africa, Cuba, Algeria, or elsewhere. [123]

After *Ramparts* magazine disclosed the CIA connection in 1967, ten former NSA presidents wrote a joint statement disavowing the allegation that the covert CIA funding had any influence on the national or international policy of NSA. Some former students

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and cared enough to get Americans of all political views to the festival." The *New York Times* reported that The Independent Service financed a newspaper, cultural exhibits, and two jazz clubs during the festival. Steinem believed that its most important work, however, was to convince youths from Asia, Africa and Latin America that some Americans understood their aspirations for national self-determination. "C.I.A. Subsidized Festival Trips: Hundreds of Students Were Sent to World Gatherings," *New York Times* (New York, February 21, 1967).

122 For more on the NSA-CIA connection, see Paget, "From Stockholm to Sweden," and also Johnston, "The United States National Student Association: Democracy, Activism, and the Idea of the Student, 1947-1978."

123 Farabee, *Making It Through the Night and Beyond*, 103.

who had been active in NSA felt duped or betrayed, others viewed it as an understandable, if not ironic, bargain.[124]

CONCLUSION

Unfortunately, the revelation of secret CIA funding besmirched the reputation of the organization to such a degree that today many know of NSA only because of it. Yet the influence and importance of NSA in cultivating student and ultimately, national leadership is an overlooked but important aspect of postwar American history. Countless students involved with NSA became active in local, state, or federal government. Still others went into civil rights organizing, higher education, or private enterprise, utilizing the network of friends they developed as young adults in NSA. Civil rights organizers, including SNCC leaders James Foreman, Ed King, Charles McDew, Casey Hayden, Bob Zellner, Dorothy Dawson, D'Army Bailey, Allard Lowenstein, Connie Curry, and many others, first met through NSA.[125] The founders of Students for a Democratic Society

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124 Friends of Constance "Connie" Curry, a lifelong civil rights activist who served as the director of the NSA Southern Student Human Relations Seminar (the subject of Chapter Five), gave her a plaque after the CIA funding revelation in 1967. It reads, "The Civil Rights Division of the Central Intelligence Agency covertly presents the OUTSTANDING YOUNG DUPE OF AMERICA AWARD to Constance "Witty" Curry, who, through her Naïveté, Lack of Perception, and Dumbness, has made a Substantial Contribution to Our Cause." It is "signed" by, among others, "Allard Lowenstein, Liberal Establishment Infiltration Unit" and "S. Carmichael, Black Power Task Force." Copy in possession of the author, shared from the personal collection of Constance Curry.

125 James Foreman was active in student politics at Roosevelt University and served as chairman of its delegation to the NSA Convention in 1956. Allard Lowenstein

(SDS) first organized at NSA conferences, including Al Haber, Tom Hayden, and Rob Burlage. The scores of student leaders who participated in NSA reads as a "Who's Who" of twentieth century political actors of various stripes, including Senator Elizabeth Hannaford (Dole), Senator Lamar Alexander, Representative Barney Frank, and President Bill Clinton.[126]

The marked idealism of American youth after World War II created a flurry of activity on college campuses. Students brought an internationalist mindset to both new and old youth organizations, and overlapping networks created new opportunities for collaboration. The Student Y and the National Student Association both cultivated the leadership of young people and provided unprecedented opportunities for southern

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served as NSA president from 1950-1951, and returned frequently as a "guiding light" in the organization. Constance Curry was active in NSA as a student from 1953 to 1958, then as a director of the NSA Southern Student Human Relations Project from 1960 to 1964. Ed King and the other students mentioned attended the 1960 and 1961 conferences. For more on NSA and civil rights activism, see Chapter Five on the NSA Southern Student Human Relations Project.

126 Elizabeth (Hanford) Dole represented the Duke Woman's Student Government at the 1957 NSA student body president's conference. Lamar Alexander and Bruce Babbitt attended the 1959 Congress. Barney Frank represented Harvard at the 1960 Congress, authoring a resolution in support of the sit-ins. Clinton attended the NSA convention in 1967, just months after the CIA covert funding was exposed. The revelation damaged the group's reputation, but he recalled that NSA "still commanded the support of a lot of students all over America…. The NSA was full of people like me who were uncomfortable with the more militant SDS but still wanted to be counted in the ranks of those working to end the war." made lifelong friends and political allies at the 1967 NSA convention, and mingled with international students there. He especially remembered speaking with "representatives of the Baltic 'captive nations'" who were there because of NSA's "history of opposing strict totalitarianism." Bill Clinton, *My Life* (New York: Knopf, 2004), 109.

students to engage with the animating issues of the postwar generation. These included a universal desire to avoid a third world war, efforts to build bonds of friendship with international counterparts, and a commitment to strengthen democracy at home and abroad in order to maintain national security. Students disagreed on the best ways to accomplish these ends, and the issues of racial discrimination and communist influence frequently came to the forefront during student debates. The interracial and international aspects of the work of the Student Y and the NSA enabled students to maintain their belief in the possibility of "One World" even as the Cold War intensified in the late 1940s.

Chapter 2: Student Rights and the Advent of the Citizen-Student

> I feel that I am part of the student body and I want to cheer and express school spirit as part of the student body. Not be set apart down behind the goal post in an undignified and humiliating manner as proposed by the administration.[1]
>
> -James R. Walker, Jr., UNC law student, 1951

In 1951, five African American students integrated the law school at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, after a lengthy legal battle. UNC hoped to pre-empt the public spectacles which had taken place in other parts of the South, and the students matriculated with little fanfare. These black youth did not receive standard-issue student passbooks for entry to the student section of the UNC football stadium, but tickets for the "colored" general seating area instead. James R. Walker Jr., quoted above, protested this differential treatment. Campus groups rallied in support, and the student body president "challenged the right" of the administration to segregate students at the stadium.[2] Soon, the administration did give the black law students standard passbooks. In private, however, UNC Chancellor House asked them to voluntarily sit in an isolated section reserved for African Americans. He explained, "There is a distinction between educational services" required by law, and "social recognition."[3]

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1 *Daily Tar Heel* (Chapel Hill, NC, September 27, 1951).

2 "UNC Policy Hit by Bowers. Segregation of Walker to Bring Suit by NAACP," *Daily Tar Heel* (Chapel Hill, NC, September 28, 1951).

3 "Tar Heel Segregation Policy Causes Student Movement," *NSA News* (Philadelphia, PA, November 1951).

The newly admitted black law students refused to comply with this "Gentleman's Agreement" to maintain segregation.[4] White student leaders from thirty-five campus groups, including student government, the NSA, the YM/YWCA, and the debate and honor societies, joined the law students in protesting the administration's actions. A delegation of campus leaders met with Chancellor House, and insisted that there should be no second-class students at UNC. During the two-hour conversation, one student leader appealed to the Bible and the Constitution, both of which, he claimed, held that no one should be denied rights based on race. The UNC chancellor was unmoved. A member of the debate team then protested that administrators had not consulted with Carolina students when they decided to deny African Americans the rights of all students. "Not only were you not consulted," Chancellor House retorted, "you were not considered!"[5]

Undeterred, the law students appealed to the governor as well as the UNC administration. In late September and early October 1951, Carolina students held public debates and called on the administration to treat their African American colleagues as

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4 "Students to Attend Games; Deny Gentleman's Agreement with House," *Daily Tar Heel* (Chapel Hill, NC, October 16, 1951).

5 "Resolutions Are Presented to House In Informal Segregation Discussion," *Daily Tar Heel* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1951). Barry Farber was one of the UNC students in this delegation, and he recalls that "Shamefully…I smiled inwardly at Chancellor House's Mussolini-like putdown of our juvenile foray into civil rights. Proudly, though, my admiration for his slashing domination of that little meeting did not diminish or deflect my opposition to his dictate." Barry Farber, "Desegregating Kenan Stadium in Chapel Hill," in *American Students Organize: Founding the National Student Association After World War II: An Anthology and Sourcebook*, by Eugene G. Schwartz and United States National Student Association (Westport, CT: American Council on Education/Praeger, 2006), 441,443.

equal members of the university.[6] Richard Murphy, a white member of the Campus Y and soon-to-be NSA president, used his student government position to make a powerful speech in which he argued that "[a] student's right has been abridged. If this is allowed to go unquestioned the rights of every member of the student community are in danger."[7] This was not about "liberalism versus conservatism," Murphy insisted, since the same policy of denying rights based on group affiliation could just as easily apply to fraternities or members of a religious faith. The crux of the issue was that the policy created two classes of students, and he maintained, "[t]here ought to be only one class student on this campus – first class." Fellow white student leader Barry Farber related an anecdote about international student reaction to American student timidity:

> These Brazilian boys were amazed that American students have been slow to organize and show a little backbone. "In other parts of the world the title of 'Students' ranks right up there with 'Doctor' and 'Lawyer,' Amado told me. 'For too long students of America have been patted on the head and told to run along. If you ever hope to win the recognition of your people and your government you've got to build a powerful national students' organization.'[8]

Farber, who served as NSA chairman for the Virginia-Carolinas region, appealed for solidarity among students, and he worked with his classmates in student government and the YMCA to coordinate their efforts.[9] He presided over a meeting of varsity

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6 Prominent students involved in the protest included Richard Murphy, Henry Bowers, Jimmy Wallace, Ken Barton, Barry Farber, and Richard Murphy – all active in NSA, UNC student government, and the UNC Campus Y. Barry Farber recalled that his NSA colleagues rallied students dorm by dorm to protest the matter.

7 Editorial, "Reason Speaks," *Daily Tar Heel* (Chapel Hill, NC, October 5, 1951).

8 *Daily Tar Heel* (Chapel Hill, NC, October 5, 1951).

9 Richard Murphy later recalled, "The key organizers of the 35 groups that called on Chancellor House were virtually all NSAers; Henry Bowers, student body

athletes in the Monogram Club, who voted unanimously to support the black law students' rights. Farber rushed word of the unanimous stand of the athletes to the UNC student government meeting in progress. The segregationist students dropped their opposition, and the student reps passed a similar resolution. "You didn't monkey around with the will of athletes in that part of the South," Farber recalled. The next day the administration finally assented, and Kenan Stadium became an integrated public facility. The students had won.

The 1951 UNC student passbook incident represented just one victory in a long battle of authority that burgeoned on college campuses after World War II. During this time, American youth began to question the nature and quality of higher education, asserting their rights to participate in decision-making of matters that affected them. The postwar assertion of student rights allowed American youth to claim new space in the political sphere—a space that had been claimed long ago by their counterparts in other countries. This development took place against a dynamic historical backdrop. The G.I. Bill threw open the doors of higher education to a much greater cross-section of Americans, and began changing the meaning and aims of university life in ways that left administrators scrambling to catch up. While colleges reveled in new infusions of public capital, students themselves looked for ways to impact the world around them even before they attained the degrees that had traditionally signaled entry into full citizenship.

> President [and Richard Murphy's roommate]; Jimmy Wallace, one of the original delegates at Prague; Ken Barton, NSA delegate; and myself, then serving as [NSA's] NIC [National Interim Committee] Chairman…this started as a secret project of the Golden Fleece, the honorary society on campus. Barry played a critical role, as he describes…I was appointed (by President Bowers) to act as floor leader for the resolutions condemning the administration's actions." Quoted in Farber, "Desegregating Kenan Stadium in Chapel Hill," n. 2, 433.

At the same time, the NAACP worked assiduously to challenge the legal obstacles preventing black veterans and youth from participating in this relatively rapid expansion of educational access.

As African American students insisted on their rights in public universities, white students rallied behind this principle as well. "Student status" at state-supported institutions empowered black youth in their quest for equality, as it threw into stark relief the discriminatory practices that had so long gone unquestioned in Southern communities. Once white and black youth interacted as students, they began to relate to each other as individuals, shattering previously held racial stereotypes. The interaction of young people and diverse ideas at state-supported Southern college campuses created an environment that was uniquely conducive to challenging the status quo. This pattern would recur in other parts of the South in the postwar years. Once the issue was no longer abstract or hypothetical, many white students joined the effort to end discrimination. This shared student status between whites and blacks provided a new context for the argument for racial equality.

As the UNC Chancellor's reaction demonstrated, however, the claim to "student rights" was already a hard sell to some administrators, even without appeals for racial equality. This chapter explores the quest for student rights after World War II by focusing on the most intense arenas of conflict between students on Southern college campuses: debates about the proper organization, rights, and composition of the student population. Southern youth considered these questions in student government, the campus press, and NSA. This story begins with the influence of veterans, who, as Chapter 1 relates, swelled the ranks of higher education in the immediate postwar years. Their presence democratized the student community in crucial ways. In addition to the more mature and diverse profile of veterans as a cohort, they brought higher expectations

to the university. They were more willing to voice criticisms of perceived deficiencies. Significantly, veterans also led the way when it came to organizing - first as veterans, then as students. A greater propensity to organize infused postwar campus life, and heightened the debate over the nature of student rights. But this debate extended well beyond campus borders, and battles over NSA affiliation illustrated the ways that a fear of American students acting "out of their place" could prompt race and red-baiting. The actions of the campus press and student government most clearly illustrate the ways in which Southern student leaders interpreted the challenges before them, and the seriousness with which they pursued solutions to the biggest issues of the day.

It was not a coincidence that desegregation provided the flashpoint to push for student rights. The question of whom the university should serve caused the greatest public controversies. By focusing on flagship universities in Southern states, this chapter illustrates the ways that the debate over student rights crystallized with the efforts of black applicants to gain entry and equal treatment at formerly segregated institutions. Debates over who could be a student, and what their rights should be, foreshadowed off-campus battles over the meaning of citizenship in the postwar world.

VETERANS AND THE DEMOCRATIC IMPULSE

In the 1940s, college students could not vote until they turned 21, reinforcing the perception that they were still "kids," and that universities were a finishing school for full participation in adult society.[10] The Young Republicans Club, the Young Democrats

10 Congress lowered the voting age to 18 years with the passage of the 26th amendment in 1971. This act followed years of student activism in opposition to both the Vietnam War and the expectation that youth should bear the burden of citizenship on the battlefield even as the law denied them a political voice as voters.

Club and other such "youth divisions" reflected this "adults-in-training" mentality and status of college students. Even the most student-minded administrators saw extracurricular activities as good "practice" for the real world, but not necessarily a vehicle for significant political activity. But increasingly, students after World War II espoused the notion that they had earned the right to lead American society after members of their generation had fought and died for freedom on a global stage, and been recognized for their profound acts of courageous citizenship. As a consequence, veterans were less inclined to renounce their rights and go back to a "citizens-in-training" mindset when they became students. Instead, many argued vociferously against paternalistic practices and in favor of greater rights, beginning with the 18-year-old right to vote movement, which the UT student government and others supported in the spring of 1945.

Student discontent, of course, is as old as university education, and the first student protest reportedly took place over the quality of food at Harvard in 1766.[11] Similarly, struggles over academic freedom long pre-date the mid-twentieth century.[12] Students often defended controversial professors, and frequently protested their dismissals or denial of tenure, but the principle of intellectual freedom did not extend directly to students per se. Yet the experience of World War II made postwar student claims to academic freedom and full citizenship qualitatively different from earlier arguments over the proper relationships between universities and students. Postwar student leaders like Jim Smith at the University of Texas began to criticize aspects of the

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11 The student's protest slogan was "Behold, our butter stinketh!" Brax, *The First Student Movement*, 3.

12 For a historical overview of student protest in the United States beginning with the first universities, see the introduction and earlier chapters of Brax, *The First Student Movement*.

unequal power relations between university and student. Career-minded youth in the mid-1940s chafed at the low quality of instruction in large, often hastily assembled classes, taught by faculty whose age and experience often mirrored their own. Veterans in particular approached classroom teaching with higher expectations, and expressed their criticisms of universities that were eager to cash in on G.I. tuition funds but not equipped to deliver quality teaching to inflated classes.[13]

Several elements went into a new seriousness and sense of purpose among students after the war. The abundant presence of veterans at universities undeniably changed the tenor of campus politics. The highest pre-war enrollment at the University of Texas was 11,000 students; yet in the fall of 1946 over 17,000 students matriculated at the Forty Acres campus. Veterans made up 63 percent of the UT student body. *Daily Texan* editor Horace Busby observed, the students on campus being "older, more purposeful, considerably more wise."[14] Veterans were less willing to accept paternalistic practices and treatment, and less tolerant of immaturity in their peers. They also commanded respect that ordinary students did not, from all those around them. But all students experienced the campus conditions induced by the postwar increase in enrollment, including crowded classrooms and makeshift housing. The degree of collaboration that students sought with each other in this environment was unique. An abundance of new organizations sprang up after the war, and old ones witnessed reinvigoration. These attempts at collaboration among students indicate a sense of

13 Dyer, "The Married Veteran at the University of Texas, 1947."

14 Horace Busby, *Daily Texan* (Austin, TX, March 3, 1946).

generational solidarity, and the idea of joint responsibility for their communities and the broader postwar world.[15]

Veterans quickly became leaders on college campuses. They were disciplined and used to working in teams, and they applied a propensity to organize in order to deal with common problems. At the University of Texas, this impulse found expression through "a veritable explosion in both the number and the sophistication of student government committees" from the immediate postwar to the early 1950s.[16] In 1949, the Student-Regent Liaison Committee became a permanent body which consisted of the student government president, the *Daily Texan* editor, and other campus leaders. Students sought a direct line of communication with this group which wielded considerable power, and with whom many viewed antagonistically, due to the Rainey debacle. They met with a group of Regents before each Board meeting, and discussed everything from financial concerns to the needs of foreign students, creating a mutual exchange of information.[17] While this high-level access was important, the Council on Fair Business Standards, organized due to inflation in campus-area businesses in 1948, soon became the biggest division of the student government. It attracted 85 students, more than Assembly meetings, and its principal charge included evaluating and developing good relationships between area businesses and students. It began by

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15 American students voiced recognition of their privileged status in the world, and they desired to help nations devastated during the war, especially the youth. Chapter Three explores this impulse to give back to the international student community. When American youth learned how successful their local efforts could be, they frequently looked for bigger projects, and greater collaboration.

16 Goldstein, "The Student Government Experience at the University of Texas at Austin, 1932-1933 to 1982-1983," 67.

17 *University of Texas Student Association Records*, 1948-1949, 511-513.

organizing a boycott of local barbers who had raised their prices by 100%, and expanded to cleaners, drug stores, boarding houses, and restaurants. This committee awarded businesses that it considered reasonably priced, clean, and student-friendly a "Steer Here" approval sign, and the newspaper carried a "Steer Here" column with reviews of businesses. The "Steer Here" campaign outraged some area businesses, who argued that the student committee wielded too much influence.[18] The expansion of committees and initiatives such as these in the postwar years expanded the realm and degree of student power significantly.[19]

Throughout the South, young leaders looked to each other for "lessons learned" and frequently organized gatherings to communicate on issues of mutual interest. In

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18 Barefoot Sanders, the 1948-1949 student government president, said in retrospect, "I think we were probably a little out of bounds…" The implementation of the Steer Here program had a definite impact on area business practices, and he commented, "If you think about it that's assuming a hell of a lot of power." Barefoot Sanders interview with David Goldstein, February 11, 1983, Dallas, TX, transcript in Goldstein, "The Student Government Experience at the University of Texas at Austin, 1932-1933 to 1982-1983," 280–299.

19 For example, a Student Committee on Housing in 1945 began formally reviewing and making recommendations on complaints against private landlords, acted as an intermediary between students and the administration, and found legal counsel for students whose cases required it. The Co-Op Committee worked to find additional houses near campus that could serve as co-ops in order to help with the postwar housing shortage crisis. The Veteran's Affairs Committee assisted in finding jobs, information, and services for ex-servicemen. The Grievance Committee investigated student complaints and obtained administrative action issues as diverse as dangerous intersections in need of stop signs and the lack of telephones in dormitories. The Committee on Faculty Evaluation instituted a rating system, against the vociferous objections of a few faculty, that has survived in some form or other ever since. The work of the International Committee is discussed in more detail in Chapter Three.

1946, the University of Tennessee (UTenn) student body president, Robert Cleveland Smith, Jr., proposed a weekend meeting of student body presidents from twenty Southern universities, an idea which originated through informal contacts among student body presidents in the region. Smith wrote, "Like most of you, although it makes no difference regarding our status today, I am a veteran."[20] Their campuses faced many of the same problems, he explained, so why not share best practices and face them together?[21] He hoped this meeting would address the need for Southern student leaders to "talk over many things, not only affecting our own student government, but some things which may have some bearing on the future of the South."[22] No faculty or administrators were allowed to attend. Another aim of the conference, Smith explained, was that they "could take a stand together as representing some 70,000 or 80,000 students" on an issue or

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20 "Our athletic teams meet on the field of sports, he observed, "but never to my knowledge has [sic] the student body presidents of major Southern universities gathered together to discuss our problems and exchange information." Robert Cleveland Smith, Jr. to Charles Vance, July 19, 1946, box 1, folder "Charles F. Vance Jr., Pres Nov 1945-July 1946," *UNC SG Records*.

21 The University of Tennessee invited the student body presidents of the following twenty schools: Kentucky, VPI, VMI, North Carolina, North Carolina State, Duke University, South Carolina, Florida, Georgia, Georgia Tech, Auburn, Alabama, Mississippi, Mississippi State, Washington and Lee, Tulane, Louisiana State, Vanderbilt and Tennessee. Robert Cleveland Smith, Jr. to Charles Vance, July 19, 1946, box 1, folder "Charles F. Vance, Jr., Pres Nov 1945-July 1946," *UNC SG Records.*

22 At the conference, each student body president would report on the structure, functions, and significant activities of their student government, generating discussion of campus issues.

problem of mutual concern, such as the "low state appropriations for higher education" in the South.[23]

Fifteen Southern student body presidents met in October 1946, representing the University of Tennessee, Mississippi State, Virginia Military Institute, Vanderbilt, the University of North Carolina, the University of South Carolina, Auburn, North Carolina State, University of Georgia, Duke University, Georgia Tech, University of Alabama, Tulane University, Washington and Lee, and the University of Virginia.[24] The student presidents, all white men, began by sitting around a large roundtable in the University of Tennessee Regents room, where they discussed the important and unique features of their student bodies.[25] The Duke student president explained that he could speak for the men only because the women had their own student body president; presumably neither she nor the other women student association presidents from the coed schools in attendance received invitations. The colleges varied in traditions and culture.[26] But they had much

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23 To sweeten the pot, Smith invited the student leaders to attend the Tennessee-Alabama football game, an annual Barnwarmin' event, a Homecoming dance with a "'name' band," and a golf tournament. Robert Cleveland Smith, Jr. to Charles Vance, July 19, 1946, box 1, folder "Charles F. Vance, Jr. Pres Nov 1945-July 1946," *UNC SG Records*.

24 Student presidents invited but not in attendance were from the University of Kentucky, Virginia Polytechnic Institute (later, Virgina Tech), the University of Florida, University of Mississippi, and Louisiana State. Robert Cleveland Smith, Jr. to Charles Vance, July 19, 1946, box 1, folder "Charles F. Vance, Jr., Pres Nov 1945-July 1946," *UNC SG Records.*

25 Minutes of the Meeting of the Southern Association of Student Presidents, October 18-20, 1946, The University of Tennessee at Knoxville, box 1, folder "Dewey Dorsett Pres Sept 1946-May 1947," *UNC SG Records*.

26 For example, Vanderbilt used a 25-cent poll tax to pay for student elections, UVA prized its honor system above all else, Tulane chose cheerleaders via student body

in common. Several spoke about the construction of new buildings on campus, financial issues, and the importance of various veterans organizations, including the American Legion and the American Veterans Committee, that worked with student government to lobby on veterans' issues. At the end of their three days together, the group decided to create a permanent association, which they named the Southern Association of Student Presidents.[27]

The group of Southern presidents joined efforts on two initiatives. First, they resolved to ask university presidents, trustees, and governors of their states to look into expanding enrollment, ensuring adequate facilities and housing, and to "retain[ing] competent professors." They also composed a letter signed by all to General Omar Bradley regarding a new federal law that restricted the amount of money veterans could earn before losing their G.I. Bill educational benefits. Writing for the group, University of Tennessee student body president Robert Smith explained that as most of the group was veterans, they confidently spoke on behalf of the many veterans on campus.[28] Smith explained in detail the predicament that the earnings restriction placed on student veterans, especially those with wives and children. He concluded by asking General

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ballot vote, and VPI had no fraternities because it was a military school "on a very strict class system."

27 They chose Georgia Tech as location for the next annual meeting. Minutes of the Meeting of the Southern Association of Student Presidents, October 18-20, 1946, The University of Tennessee at Knoxville, box 1, folder "Dewey Dorsett Pres Sept 1946-May 1947," *UNC SG Records*.

28 "Several of us at the conference fought under your command in Europe, the writer at one time being a member of the First Infantry Division. We respected your leadership in combat and we respect your leadership in the Veterans Administration…." Robert Cleveland Smith, Jr. to General Omar Bradley, October 31, 1946, box 1, folder "Dewey Dorsett Pres September 1946-May 1947," *UNC SG Records*.

Bradley's help repealing the "broad Congressional law" which stifled veteran "initiative, energy, and ability."[29] In this way, postwar student leaders used their veteran status to attain better conditions as students, elevating the general status of students in the process.

Though the 1947 meeting of Southern student presidents did not take place, students continued to interact with each other through established organizations like the Student Y, and the NSA, which provided ready-made infrastructure for regional collaboration. In 1948, David Dodson and Bob Summalt, the student body presidents of the University of Tennessee and the University of South Carolina (USC), respectively, both participated in a YMCA/YWCA regional summer conference at Blue Ridge, North Carolina. They decided to re-start the Southern Association of Student Presidents, due to increased participation in student government on their campuses. Dodson wrote, "We feel…that we should get together and talk over our problems at least once a year. The students who are now in college will soon be the leaders of the South and the better we understand each other, the better our nation will be."[30] The white male student presidents from "all states of the Old South except Louisiana" met again in October 1948. After this meeting, Jesse Dedmond, UNC student body president, reported that only the University of Florida had as strong a student government or honor code as UNC. He cited the "lack of student liberty in the democratic process at other schools" as a significant problem. The group shared a common interest in securing the continuity of vital student operations

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29 Robert Cleveland Smith, Jr. to General Omar Bradley, October 31, 1946, box 1, folder "Dewey Dorsett Pres Sept 1946-May 1947," *UNC SG Records*.

30 David Dodson to President, July 28, 1948, box 1, folder "Jesse Dedmond, Pres June 1948-April 1949," *UNC SG Records*.

at each of their member universities, and they elected to pool their resources.[31] The next year, they focused on campus tensions and the dynamics of student politics, specifically the role of women, Greeks/Independents, and veterans. Thus, while veteran issues dominated the immediate postwar agenda, once organized, Southern youth used their newfound influence to elevate the general status of students.

WHAT SHOULD BE THE RIGHTS OF THE STUDENT?

The notion that students had inherent "rights" was new in the postwar era. One former student recalls that the concept was "scarcely heard of before" and that "[e]ven among students and rare faculty or administrative advocates of student rights, there were continuing arguments about which rights were important."[32] The National Student Association, founded by veteran students after the war, attempted to create common cause among students by adopting a Student Bill of Rights and circulating it widely to college campuses around the country in 1947. Its articles addressed academic freedom, including rights to choose one's research, to invite and listen to speakers on any subject, full rights as citizens on and off campus, the right to publish news without censorship,

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31 There were also tangible and immediate benefits to organizing. Regional student collaboration enabled the group to pool their resources to obtain orchestras and classical artists at a better price. Jesse Dedmond, "Student Presidents Meet," *Daily Tar Heel* (Chapel Hill, NC, November 2, 1948).

32 Janet Welsh Brown, "Student Rights, Academic Freedom, and NSA," in *American Students Organize: Founding the National Student Association After World War II: An Anthology and Sourcebook*, by Eugene Schwartz (Westport, CT, 2006), 375.

student involvement in curriculum development, and the right to establish an independent democratic student government.[33]

The NSA's Bill of Student Rights concluded with an affirmation of the "right to equal opportunity to enjoy these rights without regard to race, color, sex, national origin, religious creed, or political beliefs."[34] This was a far-reaching and potentially highly controversial statement, and unsurprisingly, it generated serious disagreement within the ranks of the NSA. It also flirted at the margins of NSA's supposedly nonpartisan political stance. One student who was active in the formation of NSA recalls that "wider civil and political rights - the rights of students as citizens" provoked the most controversy from within and outside college campuses.[35] The NSA's principled inclusion of minority students as recipients of student rights brought it into direct conflict with segregation. This assertion of equality of opportunity for all students was a perfect example of how student activism, no matter what its immediate goal, often led to both tacit and active criticism of the country's unjust racial regime—particularly in the South.

American youth had to achieve a basic degree of organization before such debates could even take place.[36] Through student government and the student press, postwar

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33 NSA Constitution, box 1, *United States Student Association Records*, University of Wisconsin at Madison.

34 NSA Constitution, box 1, *United States Student Association Records*, University of Wisconsin at Madison.

35 Brown, "Student Rights, Academic Freedom, and NSA," 376. Brown attributes this shift to the "values of a generation that grew up in wartime and became imbued with a sense of personal and collective responsibility for protecting and expanding democracy."

36 In the mid-1940s, not all colleges and universities had student governments, and the degree of student autonomy for these ranged considerably. Even schools such as Yale, Columbia, and Fordham had no system of student government at this time.

students challenged each other to take positions on important issues of the day, and they gained experience negotiating with each other, faculty, administrators, and members of the community to achieve their goals. In this way, college campuses ideally provide space for students to create their own institutions and to act on issues that matter most to them. Students first had to collectively assert their right to participate in decision-making to facilitate this process. NSA provided one such support network to raise awareness of student rights and to publicize violations. When Michigan State University placed seven students on indefinite disciplinary suspension for their advocacy of the Federal Employees Practices Commission in 1947, Jim Smith publicly condemned the actions as part of a "state-wide 'Red Hunt" and warned that the "private affairs of Michigan students may easily become public affairs of students everywhere."[37] All American students, he claimed, had a vested interest in the "extension of democratic student-controlled student government" and "independence and freedom from censorship of student organizations and publications" on individual campuses. Because suppression of students with left-leaning political convictions "can easily lead to suppression of students for reasons not concerned with political characteristics at all," he encouraged all students to uphold the principles of free speech. "You have it in your power," Smith wrote, "to establish a pattern of intelligent, effective, student opposition to coercive tactics by those who refuse to recognize student rights….It is, therefore, imperative that you act

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NSA sought to assist American students in developing self-representation by establishing student governments on individual campuses. See americanstudentsorganize.org.

37 Jim Smith, "Letter to All Michigan Delegates or Observers to the Chicago Student Conference," in *American Students Organize: Founding the National Student Association After World War II: An Anthology and Sourcebook,* by Eugene Schwartz, 2006, 120–121.

wisely."[38] After a war fought by young people on behalf of democracy, Smith wanted his fellow students to question the assumptions of their elders and to exercise the rights they had won in the factories and on the battlefields of World War II.

In asserting their rights, many students insisted that they were responsible for their own education. Through their collaboration with members of NSA chapters at other universities, they borrowed methods used on other campuses such as conducting a comprehensive educational evaluation. Charles Sellers, Jr. chaired a student government investigative committee to assess the quality of education at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1948-1949. His committee interviewed faculty and administrators and assessed the student academic experience. In its study, the group recommended various curricula changes, proposing the elimination of requirements for the second year of Physical Education and a foreign language.[39] The report suggested specific course schedules for each department, and recommended further study of general student welfare issues. Sellers' committee also delved into more philosophical questions, such as "What is the purpose of the university?" and "Whom should the university educate?"[40] On the question of "who should be a student," they asked, should only the

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38 Ibid., 121.

39 Sellers would go on to participate in the Freedom Rides in 1961, and to embark in a career as a historian. Charles Sellers, Jr. to the President of the Student Body, September 26, 1949, box 1, folder "William E. Mackie, President May 1949-March 1950," *UNC SG Records*.

40 The report considered both of these questions from varying viewpoints. They considered the tension between the university's two purposes: graduate training and undergraduate teaching, as well as the arguments for a more general, holistic education versus specialized courses of study. Charles Sellers, Jr. to the President of the Student Body, September 26, 1949, box 1, folder "William E. Mackie, President May 1949-March 1950," *UNC SG Records*.

highest achieving high school students gain admission? Or should the university provide opportunities for students who came from under-performing school districts? Ultimately, they recommended that incoming students take an aptitude test, not to restrict admissions to the top scorers, but to give students a more realistic idea of the amount of work that university study would entail. Sellers acknowledged that some might discount the findings of students, but no one else, he argued, had undertaken such an evaluation of the core purposes of the university. "We are convinced, he wrote, "that students at Chapel Hill are capable of making such an investigation with thoroughness and maturity enough to command respect."[41] The students hoped the faculty and administration would address the problems and concerns they outlined in the report, and compared their findings to those resulting from similar investigations conducted by students from other schools.

This change in perspective impressed some but provoked considerable opposition among other university actors who felt that the assertion of student rights in academic policy implied "exploitation" of students or "incompetence" on the part of administrators and faculty.[42] Nevertheless, students continued to voice their opinions about areas of campus life that previously had been the sole province of university employees. Rule-making was one area that many universities conceded to student participation, allowing some consultation on curfew times, dress code regulations, and visitation policy in dormitory housing. An administrator recalled that many of these rules on coed campuses applied solely to women, under the assumption that controlling male students was best

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41 Charles Sellers, Jr. to the President of the Student Body, September 26, 1949, box 1, folder "William E. Mackie, President May 1949-March 1950," *UNC SG Records*.

42 Gordon Klopf, "The College Administrator Looks at the National Student Association," *School and Society* 70, no. 1810 (August 27, 1949).

accomplished "through the regulations for women."[43] When women who had served in the armed forces returned to campus as students, however, they often balked at such paternalistic policies. Many campuses adjusted the typical rule that single women under the age of 25 had to live in supervised dormitory housing by classifying female veterans as "married."[44] Despite some early postwar advances, most rules reflected an *in loco parentis* approach to students, especially women, which persisted until students challenged them individually.

But among NSA member campuses in the South, a recurring question that plagued student leaders was how far they should carry the mantle of student rights. Both skeptical and even some supportive students viewed NSA's policy of promoting "students as students" on the national and even international stage as too grandiose; they wanted more "bread and butter" programming that dealt with campus-specific issues. Emory University was one the earliest NSA supporters in the South, but in 1953 the student government council voted (14-4) to disaffiliate with NSA, after a vigorous, year-long debate. An editorial in *The Emory Wheel* decried the council's decision to withdraw from NSA as indicating "self satisfaction" and "irresponsibility to national and international affairs and opinions." It made no sense, the student editor argued, for Emory to stop sending "delegates to a national convention at which national issues

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43 Robert Shaffer, who served as Dean of Students at Indiana University as well as a national advisor to NSA, recalled that in the postwar period, "It was generally thought that if women had to be in their residences by 10:30 pm during the week and 12:00 pm on Fridays and Saturdays, the men would go home and study." Robert Shaffer, "The Postwar Transformation of Student Life," in *American Students Organize: Founding the National Student Association After World War II: An Anthology and Sourcebook*, by Eugene G. Schwartz, 2006, 327.

44 Ibid.

affecting students are discussed, and at which there is an exchange of ideas on the purpose and operation of student government."[45]

On the other side of the issue, Emory student body president Stell Huie argued that NSA seemed "to have lost sight of the fact that its primary concern ought to be the development and enhancement of student government on the campus," rather than "declarations of policy concerning 'academic freedom' and equal rights and opportunities for education."[46] In other words, NSA should worry and talk less about opening the doors of college campuses, and work instead toward initiatives that would benefit the students there already. Indeed, NSA struggled to meet the demands of so many member campuses and to provide programs that dealt with practical issues affecting campus leaders. The regional conferences were a better venue for this, but NSA regional programming was inconsistent, and only as strong as the student leadership in that region. Moreover, the theme of social change on campus and who could be a student there was especially prominent at Emory in 1953, the first year that it admitted white women students and a decade before Black students would be accepted.

The terrain in which university and student actions took place changed considerably after the 1954 Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, and the critiques of NSA would increase in the mid-1950s. In some ways, the story of student activism in the postwar South could be classified as "Before Brown" and "After Brown." The general perception before 1954 was that NSA was a progressive, left-leaning organization, but one which offered students many opportunities to lead and get involved

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45 "A Great Loss," *Emory Wheel* (Decatur, GA, October 29, 1953).

46 "Council Committee Will Study Possibility of Leaving NSA," *Emory Wheel* (Decatur, GA, October 16, 1952).

in their communities. A major consequence of the 1954 desegregation decision, however, was that Southern white politicians opposed affiliation with NSA due to its stated support of desegregation and to a lesser extent, its advocacy of federal aid to higher education. Although the NSA stance on desegregation was not new, university affiliation and relationship with NSA became a battleground where resistance to *Brown* could be conveniently registered. The attitude among some segregationists was that if they could wage a strong enough counter attack against the call for desegregation, they might be able to stave off the changes that *Brown I* and *Brown II* mandated in education. Southern university administrators came under increased pressure, and conservatives spread anti-NSA propaganda in university communities and newspapers.

A handful of Southern flagship schools, however, including the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill and the University of Texas at Austin (for a time), managed to endure the conservative backlash against NSA in the post-Brown era. Although UT students voted against affiliation again in 1953, Student Association leaders chose to unilaterally affiliate with NSA in 1954, skipping the campus referendum altogether. UT sent a strong student delegation to the NSA conference that year, including student body president Ray Farabee (formerly Campus Y chair). At the 1955 convention, Farabee chaired a contentious committee on desegregation, managing to bring students from all over the country into agreement, with only a few dissenting. This impressive feat caught the attention of many at the convention, and they nominated Farabee for NSA Student Government Vice President (SGVP). Following Jim Smith's lead almost a decade before, Farabee won, and he also resigned as student body president to assume the national post. For the next year, he traveled to 200 universities throughout the country, especially in the South, raising awareness about NSA. A year later, he

deferred UT law school and active duty in the U.S. Air Force to serve as the NSA president from 1957-1958.

Campus newspapers were a key component of the collegiate landscape during the postwar period, acting not only as a gatekeeper of the daily stream of available information, but also as a guardian of student rights. A healthy distance usually existed between the daily papers and the student government associations, and skepticism often marked relations between the two.[47] On campuses like UT and UNC, an independent student press created a forum for debate, operating as a kind of "checks and balances" system among campus entities. Campus coverage of international and national events was comprehensive, and the more liberal stances on racial segregation tended to emerge from the editors and writers of Southern campus newspapers. Even more than student governments, campus newspapers remained highly attuned to the activities taking place on other campuses. Part of this was journalistic competition, but increasingly a spirit of student unity emerged as editors chose to include the notable actions of students at other universities in their own campus papers.[48]

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47 *The Daily Texan* acted as an ever-aware critic of the UT Student Association. It described the 1944-45 Student Assembly as "the greatest do-nothing, say-nothing, leave-early Assembly in the history of the Forty Acres." In rare praise, the paper applauded Frank Cooksey's 1959-1960 tenure as president, describing the Student Association under his direction as "a resolution-passing, bill proposing body. Its effect may be questionable," the paper noted, "but the volume of discussion and deliberation is in itself impressive." "Editorial," *Daily Texan* (Austin, TX, December 4, 1945); "Editorial," *Daily Texan* (Austin, TX, May 11, 1960).

48 Student interest in other campus newspapers was not always so high-minded; the *Daily Texan* and the *Daily Tar Heel*, for example, carried letters written from the opposing side chiding the other school's unsportsmanlike behavior at athletic competitions.

In 1952, UT freshman Willie Morris began writing a weekly column for the *Daily Texan* called "Neighboring News." This column became a forum where Morris shared his observations about what was happening at other colleges. He pored through stacks of college newspapers each week, sometimes to highlight positive action, many times to poke fun. He recalled, "I began to read about strange ideas like integration, and issues of academic freedom...this was heady stuff indeed."[49] A native Mississippian, at UT Morris grew intensely aware of the failings of the South, and he recalled cheering in 1954 with "a large part of the Texas student section" for a touchdown scored by Washington State player Duke Washington, the first African American to play football in the UT stadium.[50] Morris wrote for the paper throughout his UT career, and won election as editor in 1955.[51] He used the front page of the *Texan* to draw attention to the issue of desegregation at the university in articles that favored equal access to all areas of student

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49 Morris wrote that he would read a hundred or more college papers each week, "trying to understand the incomprehensible goings-on in Berkeley or Ann Arbor or Colorado Springs or Chapel Hill. I gradually began to see the differences in all these papers; the ones from Harvard or Yale and a few big state universities were almost daringly outspoken, and kept talking about "conformity" and "self-satisfaction" in a way that both mystified and aroused me, but the great majority which poured in from all over America spoke a tongueless idiom….Something was out of order here, but I did not know quite what or why." Willie Morris, *North Toward Home* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1967), 162.

50 Ibid., 170.

51 While campaigning for the office of *Daily Texan* editor, a student asked Morris his opinion of integration. He replied, "There's an inner turmoil in the United States, there's an inner turmoil in me. The Supreme Court decision was inevitable, but I don't' think any universal rule can be applied to the entire nation when the time for integration comes. I don't think Ole Miss is ready for integration. I think the University of Texas is." Ibid., 162.

life.[52] He also criticized what he saw as a tendency toward apathy and complacency at UT, and began to push the envelope in his editorials, writing exposés on the oil and gas industry in Texas, and blasting the regents who he claimed represented "the most uncivilized wealth in America."[53] Not surprisingly, his words drew rebuke and attempted sanction from both administrators and regents.

Morris remembered a faculty member's defense, during a meeting of the faculty senate, of the *Daily Texan*'s right to free speech, arguing for the "dignity of the student" as a "new citizen."[54] But a minor war ensued, and the Board of Regents attempted to restrict the *Texan* from commenting "on state or national controversy." One regent exclaimed, "The *Texan* has gone out of bounds in discussing issues pertaining to oil and gas because 66 percent of Texas tax money comes from oil and gas." The Texas Student Publications Board, a small group of faculty, students, and regents who acted as overseers of the paper, frequently redacted Morris's columns. When this happened, he printed satirical treatises entitled "Don't Walk on the Grass" or "Let's Water the Pansies," or else he would print a blank space where the editorial should have gone, with a line indicating that the editorial had been censored for publication.[55]

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52 Morris responded in the *Texan* to students who viewed his stance as too liberal by saying: "we encourage conflicting views…we are not afraid to voice our own views, regardless of the majority's….A University ideally is a community where prejudices and class hatred ebb low, and eventually, through the perpetual hourglass of social change, fade into the realm of non-existence." Willie Morris, "The Round Up," *Daily Texan* (Austin, TX, October 1, 1955), 3.

53 Jack Bales, *Willie Morris: An Exhaustive Annotated Bibliography and a Biography* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2006), 29.

54 Morris, *North Toward Home*, 190–191.

55 Ibid., 189, 191.

As the editor of the student paper at the largest university in the South, Morris' bold stands for freedom of the press caught the attention of many, and both *The New York Times* and *The Today* show covered the controversy. The *Daily Texan*'s public row with the Board of Regents served as an inspiration for other campus dailies facing similar censorship battles. Aside from the controversy, the *Texan*'s consistent liberalism seemed to have an effect – if not directly, in at least stirring up campus discussion. In 1955, William Jones, the executive vice president of Huston-Tillotson College, a historically black school only a few blocks from the mostly-segregated University of Texas, observed that Texas was "the most favorable testing ground in the South" to attempt implementation of the court's ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education*. He found several reasons for optimism, including the role of interracial lecturers and activities in conjunction with NAACP activities in Austin, and the favorable coverage of the *Daily Texan*. The UT campus daily, he said, "was blessed with an editorial staff that envisioned a new day in human relations in the South." For years the *Texan* had highlighted the fundamental questions of democracy at work in maintaining racial segregation, and Jones observed that the paper had "pricked the conscience of white youth" so that white students not only accepted but even advocated desegregation.[56] The leadership at the *Daily Texan*, he wrote, displayed a "surprising liberalism – a liberalism over and beyond anything that commercial newspapers were free to disclose, because they owed no obligation to any particular political or economic interests." Jones declared, "*The Daily Texan* was, and still is, a 'free press'"[57] It was this freedom that irked the UT

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56 William H. Jones, "Desegregation of Public Education in Texas -- One Year Afterward," *The Journal of Negro Education* 24, no. 3 (July 1, 1955): 348.

57 Ibid., 349.

regents, who went beyond censorship measures and tried to wrest control of the editor selection process away from students altogether.

A similar clash took place in Chapel Hill, where the *Daily Tar Heel* became a forum of student dissent about the meaning of *Brown v. Board of Education*. The conflict took place between the independent campus paper and the student government, whose leaders in the mid-1950s espoused more conservative stances than had their predecessors in the mid-1940s and early 1950s. Like the *Daily Texan*, the *Daily Tar Heel* advocated a mostly liberal perspective, decrying a petition signed by over a thousand students in the area that protested the *Brown* decision and asked the North Carolina state legislature to prevent the "mixing of races in public schools." The paper applauded the campus Methodist group, the Wesley Foundation, which denounced racial segregation to be a denial of true Christian brotherhood, and the student editor, Charles Kuralt personally refuted the allegation that the paper was a *"Second Daily Worker."*[58]

But a group of UNC student legislators organized a campaign to investigate the paper and its integrationist message. They also began a recall initiative against Kuralt as editor. Conservative students distributed a list of twenty quotations which had appeared in the *Tar Heel* during the 1954-1955 school year. They included the previous editor, Role Neill's affirmation of the *Brown* decision as "the right thing to do" and Kuralt's argument that "[t]here is no excuse for undergraduate [education] being limited to white

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[58] Two years after Kuralt's graduation from the University of North Carolina he began a forty-year career at CBS News, where his *On the Road* and *Sunday Morning* television segments earned him national acclaim. On a trip to Brazil in 1962 he befriended fellow journalist Hunter S. Thompson, lending him bail and rent money when needed.

students."[59] The conservative student group claimed (incorrectly) that only the newspapers of Emory University and the University of North Carolina had gone on record "favoring an end to segregation." Against this contentious backdrop, thirteen students from various secular and religious campus organizations published a joint statement in the *Daily Tar Heel* calling for the immediate admission of African Americans to the university in May 1955. In response, Donald Fowler, UNC student body president, wrote the Board of Trustees, the chancellor, and the governor to distance himself from the *Daily Tar Heel* and the campus organizations whose pro-integration sentiments the paper published.[60] Fowler wrote, "While recognizing the right of these students to express this opinion I feel it is equally important to suggest that it is not necessarily a reflection of the majority viewpoint on this Campus." Fowler claimed that the majority of students were in favor of the trustees' decision to delay integration, and he pledged "our cooperation and full support to their action."[61] He received letters of thanks

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59 The header on the document reads, "Why should the Daily Tar Heel, Student Newspaper at Chapel Hill, N.C., be carrying on a campaign to break down segregation and bring about integration of Negro and White races? -- Who are the men behind the scenes directing this propaganda?" After the twenty quotations, the document concludes, "Hasn't the time come when the legislature should get information regarding the amount of money the Wesley Foundation, the American Friends Service Committee he Ford Foundation and the Communist Party and other groups are putting in the campaign to influence students in colleges in this area?" "Quotations from *Daily Tar Heel*," box 1, folder "Donald O. Fowler, President, 1955-1956," *UNC SG Records*.

60 Donald O. Fowler to Members of the Board of Trustees of the University of North Carolina, June 1, 1955, box 1, folder "Donald O. Fowler, President, 1955-1956," *UNC SG Records*.

61 Donald O. Fowler to Members of the Board of Trustees of the University of North Carolina, June 1, 1955, box 1, folder "Donald O. Fowler, President, 1955-1956," *UNC SG Records*.

from the regents, but was succeeded by student body presidents who supported integration at UNC. An important feature of this debate was that student critics were careful to support the right of the paper to publish pro-integration sentiment, even as they looked for ways to counter it.

The question of student rights in connection with integration would resurface again in NSA battles throughout the late 1950s and early 1960s. To some, a student organization such as NSA had no business taking positions on such issues in the first place. In 1960, the University of North Carolina's student body president David Grigg criticized NSA's "very definite lack of emphasis on…'purely campus problems."[62] He was in a tough position; as an advocate for maintaining NSA affiliation, he understood that its more progressive stances put it at odds with the majority of the opinion of the white South. In fact, a conservative organization called the Southern University Student Government Association (SUSGA) formed in 1959 as a direct competitor to NSA. SUSGA admitted only white schools and purported to deal exclusively with campus-specific issues. Though UNC did not formally affiliate with SUSGA, Grigg attended its second conference in 1960 to establish communication, as he felt that SUSGA was "the organization most representative of Southern white student opinion...and is composed of schools with problems most similar to ours." He also attempted to persuade SUSGA members to attend NSA conferences, where he thought their viewpoints should be represented.

UNC would remain firmly in the NSA camp, as it had throughout the postwar era (albeit with significant challenge), but Grigg was not alone in his misgivings. Similarly,

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62 "Statement by David L. Grigg," 11 May 1960, *UNC SG Records*.

Lowell Lebermann, Jr., who served as UT Student Association president in 1962, ascribed NSA's embattled profile on the Austin campus in the late 1950s and early 1960s to its message that students could play an important role in national and international affairs. Lebermann was an NSA advocate, and actively involved with its international programs. But both he and Grigg presided over recently desegregated public universities affiliated with NSA. Since the Southern region had fewer member schools proportionally than the rest of the country, their positions were somewhat out of step with other Southern flagships in the first place.[63] He remembers the UT Student Association sending telegrams to the University of Mississippi regarding the admission of James Meredith in 1962, after "a lot of debate" about the wording and "whether students should even be involved in this kind of thing, off-campus." Twenty years later, Lebermann described this dilemma:

> There was a big debate at that time that was coming down from the national level…of student governments and to the major campuses particularly…that made up the National Student Association. Remember, we were just coming out of the '50's – the McCarthy era and all the bad air. So there was a big debate over the concept of 'Students in Their Role as Students' – what did that mean? Were student governments to take on the never-ending… issues that simply revolved around the campus community as such; or, were we to be participants in the wider community? Were we to discuss issues of war and peace, of nuclear power;

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63 The state legislatures in Georgia and Mississippi forbade state schools from affiliating as members of NSA, due to the organization's policies of support for desegregation and the sit-in movement. "Report of the Project's Activities, September - October, 1966," box 3, folder – Reports, 1966**,** *United States National Student Association Records of the Southern Project in Human Relations*, King Center Archives, Atlanta, GA (Hereafter, cited as "*Southern Project Papers*").

63 Lowell Lebermann interview with David Goldstein, February 23, 1983, Austin, TX, transcript in Goldstein, "The Student Government Experience at the University of Texas at Austin, 1932-1933 to 1982-1983," 316.

> Were we to talk about issues of the broader communities in which our universities found themselves? And strangely enough, that was really a fairly rigorous kid of debate – where should our emphasis be?[64]

Lebermann had his own doubts at the time that students should weigh in on national and international issues, though he recalled that in a few short years he would completely agree with the notion. It "was just an emerging idea at the time," Lebermann explained, "that we could, as students, come together in a homogenous group and have influence."[65]

WHO GETS TO BE A STUDENT? THE UNIVERSITY AND WHOM IT SHOULD SERVE

When Heman Sweatt presented his application for admission to the University of Texas Law School on February 26, 1946, he placed Texas at the forefront of the desegregation battles that would mark the postwar era. The NAACP saw the University of Texas as an ideal starting point in a broad-based effort to desegregate higher education in the South.[66] UT boasted prestigious professional schools, and if the deep-pocketed

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64 Lowell Lebermann interview with David Goldstein, February 23, 1983, Austin, TX, transcript in Ibid.

65 Ibid.

66 Thurgood Marshall and the NAACP engaged in a broad-based strategy to attack the constitutionality of segregation in higher education. In 1946, they would also aid Ada Louis Sipuel in her pursuit of entry to the law school at the University of Oklahoma. Blacks were not allowed in the university town of Norman after sunset, but Sipuel proposed commuting from Oklahoma City each day to the law school. After OU refused her admission, the NAACP won a Supreme Court ruling in 1948 that stipulated that OU would have to admit Sipuel if they could not provide a separate but equal law school for blacks. The state hastily assembled a paper law school and OU rejected her application again. Two days later, six black students, including 68-year old George W. McLaurin, applied to OU graduate programs not offered elsewhere in the state. In 1950, the Supreme Court ruled in *McLaurin v. Oklahoma* that the state could not refuse admission if the degree

state of Texas could not offer truly "separate but equal" education to black students, the legal scaffolding of the doctrine could be invalidated in Southern states with fewer financial resources. University of Texas Registrar E.J. Mathews assured Sweatt that he had less "than the normal amount of prejudice against Negroes" and tried to dissuade him from applying to UT, encouraging him instead to take the state up on its standing policy of financing graduate education for black Texans who went to graduate school out of state.[67] Blacks in Texas, Mathews warned, were close to having a great deal of money spent for "equal" educational facilities, but a lawsuit could jeopardize that. Nevertheless, Sweatt submitted his application in 1946 and left the UT Main tower building. Three months later he filed suit against the president of the University, and initiated a four year legal battle waged by the NAACP that would win black students access to the UT Law School, and pave the way for desegregation in the South.

Legal attempts to desegregate colleges and campus facilities appeared to some observers of the era as isolated skirmishes between individual African American students and recalcitrant administrators who spoke for the silent majority of the white community, and it is presumed, the white student body. Indeed, Southern higher education remained largely segregated in the immediate postwar years, aside from small numbers of black students admitted to previously all-white graduate and professional schools. But the growth of student rights, as both concept and political objective in the 1940s and 1950s, created momentum for desegregation among white students at Southern state-supported

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program was not available at an in-state black institution; OU relented and admitted the students (including Sipuel). Robert Bruce Slater, "The First Black Graduates of the Nation's 50 Flagship State Universities," *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, no. 13 (October 1, 1996): 83.

67 Shabazz, *Advancing Democracy*, 67–68.

schools where previously there was little. The first African Americans at state schools had to fight for every gain, and educate well-meaning white colleagues on the realities of segregation. Their battles to integrate higher education galvanized some white students to act, forming important interracial alliances. As students acted collectively, they initiated an organic process of fighting first for student rights, then for full civil rights.

The pursuit of integration at public state schools meant different things to different constituencies, and these definitions would change throughout the postwar era. Initial judicial victories led to token numbers of black students on Southern campuses. Beyond all of the political rhetoric and administrative maneuvering, it was students who would initiate and experience desegregation first-hand. Young southerners' interactions across the color line, or lack thereof, made newly desegregated university campuses into testing grounds for democracy. The experiences of pioneering black students revealed the limitations of *de jure* desegregation, and it was black students and supportive white students who would challenge their communities to live up to American ideals and accept more meaningful types of desegregation.

A vocal minority of students immediately reacted to the question of unrestricted access of blacks to the Texas flagship. Within months of Sweatt's application for admission, students on the UT campus circulated a petition in favor of desegregating the Law School. Melvin B. Tolson, an African American poet and English professor at Wiley College, encouraged UT student actions during a campus talk in March on the economics of discrimination. Tolson, the famed debate coach and mentor to Heman Sweatt and James F. Farmer, returned to the Forty Acres in October for a captivating

lecture on the nature of law and authority.[68] A white student in the audience recalled years later that Tolson "just scintillated" for two hours, during which he also described the current program of the NAACP.[69]

In November 1946, sixty white UT students from the Student YM/YWCA, the American Veterans Committee, the Canterbury Club, Wesley Foundation, Lutheran Students Association, and Baptist Student Union held a rally in support of Sweatt.[70] They also created a student committee to raise funds and provide information for the lawsuit. Many of the students on the Sweatt fund committee were veterans, including the committee chair, twenty-two year old John Stanford, Jr. Stanford had just re-enrolled at UT after three years of service in Hawaii and Iwo Jima. The University prohibited Stanford and the student committee from collecting funds on campus, so they set up tables across Guadalupe Street, the main "drag" of the campus near the University Y.

In an unusual display of interracial public unity, students and faculty from UT attended a large NAACP rally in December 1946. The event took place in East Austin at

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68 Tolson's leadership of the all-black Wiley College debate team to victory against the University of Southern California in 1935 is depicted in the 2007 biopic film, *The Great Debaters* (Denzel Washington portrays Tolson). James L. Farmer, Jr. was a gifted Texas native who entered Wiley College at age 14 and became a champion debater. He co-founded the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) in Chicago in 1942 and worked for racial justice and an integrated society throughout his life.

69 *Daily Texan* (Austin, TX, March 1, 1946); *Daily Texan* (Austin, TX, October 31, 1946); Michael L Gillette, "The NAACP in Texas, 1937-1957" (University of Texas at Austin, 2002), 82.

70 These groups represent the theologically progressive student Christian groups on campus; the Canterbury Club is composed of students with Episcopalian affiliation, while the Wesley Club is associated with the United Methodist Church.

the Doris Miller auditorium, a newly built facility used during the war for USO and military functions named in honor of "Dorie" Miller, the first African American awarded the Navy Cross.[71] At the rally, UT professor of philosophy and education Frederick Eby condemned American racial injustice in education, and he spoke about his students' support for opening the university to blacks. Famed writer and English professor J. Frank Dobie, a student favorite and perennial thorn in the UT administration's side, gave a rousing speech that challenged students to work for immediate, not gradual, desegregation.[72] And Jim Smith, president of the UT Student's Association, stood in front of the crowd and pledged his support for equal access to blacks to study at the University of Texas. Smith had previously gone to Sweatt's home in Houston to meet him in person. A few weeks after the NAACP rally, the UT student body president would travel to Chicago to propose the "Texas Plan" to other national student leaders, creating the outline of the incipient National Student Association over the winter break.

While only a fraction of the UT student body attended rallies in favor of Sweatt, polls indicated that just over half of the white students at the University of Texas were in favor of desegregating UT's graduate schools.[73] Thurgood Marshall and NAACP strategists placed great weight on white student support when they selected the University of Texas for a test case against segregation. Michael Gillette, the chronicler of the

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71 The Navy Cross is the Navy's top honor; Colonel Nimitz awarded this to Miller for his valor at Pearl Harbor. Miller died in action in 1943.

72 President Painter would fire Professor Dobie less than a year later, in 1947, at the behest of the UT Board of Regents.

73 *Daily Texan* polls in 1948 and 1950 showed that 56% of surveyed students were in favor of expanding African American access to UT graduate programs, although only 37% supported African American access to UT undergraduate programs. *Daily Texan* (Austin, March 7, 1948); *Daily Texan* (Austin, TX, March 2, 1950).

NAACP in Texas, writes that NAACP officials knew that the Sweatt case was a "social struggle as well as a legal one," and they actively sought the support of white UT students, "whom they regarded as the state's future lawyers, officials, and community leaders." Moreover, white student support countered the Texas attorney general's claims that Sweatt would face ostracism and violence from white students if he were admitted to UT.[74]

In fact, University of Texas students created the first-ever collegiate NAACP branch on an all-white, segregated campus in 1946. Students involved with the Sweatt fund drive viewed the creation of a UT NAACP as a convenient way to coordinate the different campus elements that were in support of desegregation, while the national NAACP office saw the group as unprecedented evidence that white students accepted blacks as fellow students. The campus NAACP chapter did garner publicity and create an important avenue for interracial activities and information sharing between the Austin NAACP and white students. It brought lecturers and consultants to speak on racial justice, which stimulated awareness and interest in the topic of desegregation.[75] This motivated some students to act. In December, the *Houston Informer* reported that UT student John Stanford gave a speech in support of Sweatt's case in the basement of a (presumably African American) Baptist church in Houston, under the aegis of the youth NAACP. Stanford stated that "White students are learning that it is time for them to fight for the rights of the Negro people. If we increase our unity, we can make the South a place where everyone can have a decent living, health, and education facilities."

Unfortunately, the University of Texas NAACP devolved into public rows

74 Gillette, "The NAACP in Texas, 1937-1957," 80–81.

75 Jones, "Desegregation of Public Education in Texas -- One Year Afterward," 348.

between anticommunist Socialist students and purported Communist sympathizers and/or members. Marion Ladwig, a law student and socialist leader of the campus group, sought to purge confirmed communists including Stanford and Wendell Addington.[76] Further, he alienated moderate members by launching an effort to immediately desegregate Austin churches. But he also used his leadership of an autonomous NAACP chapter (as an officially registered campus group, only UT students were allowed) to bypass the local Austin NAACP and to directly communicate with the national NAACP, even waging accusations of communist infiltration of the largely African American Austin chapter.

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76 John Stanford, Jr. continues to be the most public communist in Texas, beginning with his 1948 arrest in Houston for handing out CP leaflets decrying "the ruthless economic, political, and social oppression of the Mexican-American people." He is most known for his victory in the 1965 Supreme Court case *Stanford v. Texas* on unlawful search and seizure. After sixty years of activism, he recalled in 2006 that he joined the Communist party the day after his discharge from the U.S. Navy because in 1946 "it was the party that most opposed fascism most consistently. It was the party that opposed racism most consistently. It was the party that most consistently supported labors demands and the demands of the Mexican-American people." In an earlier interview, he explained, "We weren't concerned about Stalin's policies during the 1950s, we were fighting against the poll tax." See Dick J. Reavis, "Gentle Giant," *San Antonio Current* (San Antonio, TX, November 6, 2003); Eric Lane, "Living History," *San Antonio Current* (San Antonio, TX, July 11, 2007).

Stanford Jr. also contends that Heman Sweatt was a Communist party member at the time of the Sweatt case. This claim is unsubstantiated, but Sweatt biographer Gary Levergne quotes Heman Sweatt's brother as stating that "only 'Joe Stalin' could force American whites to accept justice for African Americans." Socialism and communism were understandably attractive ideologies for blacks seeking racial justice in the segregated South, but the public connection of NAACP and communism would have been political suicide. Thurgood Marshall recalled that, "'Around World War II, we decided to get rid of [the commiunists in the NAACP]. We wouldn't even allow them to come to a meeting. We ran them out.'" Gary M. Lavergne, *Before Brown: Herman Marion Sweatt, Thurgood Marshall and The Long Road to Justice* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010), 92–93.

Since the NAACP could not afford to treat CP charges lightly, Ladwig's actions led to African American NAACP resignations, "demoralization" and "resent[ment] toward a white student trying to take over a black organization."[77] Leftist power struggles crippled the UT student NAACP until it disbanded in 1950.

While the *Sweatt* case worked its way through the courts, other Southern universities attempted half-measures that theoretically desegregated public graduate schools, but in actuality constructed a "second-class" experience for black students. The University of Kentucky read the writing on the wall and admitted John Wesley Hatch as the first black student to enroll at the UK Law School in 1948. Due to segregation laws, his professors taught him individually at a separate campus, in a style reminiscent of UT's hastily assembled "separate but equal" law school for blacks. In 1949, a court order forced the University of Kentucky to admit black students to the main law school in Lexington. Hatch could attend lectures with white students, but he was never able to forget his separate status. In the library, he had to sit alone at a special table. "Segregation was a fact of life in Kentucky," Hatch recalled. "It was a stressful situation to be set apart like that."[78] This pattern of partitioning the first black students in academic facilities was common until the Supreme Court ruled against this kind of segregation within academic facilities in 1950 in *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents*.

But black youth in the Lone Star State were not content to wait for a court decree to answer the question of who had the right to be a student at the University of Texas. On April 28, 1949, an impressive delegation of thirty-three black undergraduates from

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77 Gillette, "The NAACP in Texas, 1937-1957," 168–171.

78 Robert Bruce Slater, "The Blacks Who First Entered the World of White Higher Education," *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, no. 13 (July 1, 1994): 53.

Bishop, Wiley, Jarvis Christian and Huston-Tillotson Colleges marched to the University of Texas registrar's office to apply to various graduate programs. W. Astor Kirk, a faculty member at Huston Tillotson who had also applied for graduate study at UT, accompanied the students. The UT registrar directed the group to apply to Texas State University for Negroes instead, so they marched directly to the State Capital and to the Office of the Governor, petitioning on behalf of 300 black Texans who wished to apply to the best graduate schools in the state.[79] Several white UT students from the campus NAACP chapter joined in the procession, and the students protested to the governor that "separate but equal facilities would never solve the problem chiefly because of the time lag." Governor Jester replied that "time is not the whole answer."[80]

White student leaders at other state-supported Southern schools began to publicly address the issue of who should be a student on their campuses. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's student government president Bill Mackie and his attorney general John Sanders wrote the editor of the *Durham Morning Herald* on July 5,1949, to denounce the paper's "slanderous" coverage of the UNC student groups who championed Harold Epps, an African American whose case for admission to UNC Law School was working its way through the court system. Those who supported Epps, they argued, were just "normal students" who felt that the inequalities of segregation must end, and that equal education was the only way to eradicate racial prejudice. The two students referenced the paper's own poll of UNC students two years prior, which indicated that a

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79 W. Astor Kirk, *One Life, Three Professional Careers: My Civil Rights Story* (Longbeach, CA; Suitland, MD: Magic Valley Publishers; Organization Management Services Corp., 2007), 87–89.

80 *Daily Texan* (Austin, TX, April 28, 1949).

majority of Carolina graduate students favored desegregation.[81] Further, they resented the paper's efforts to stir up negative feelings in the state towards desegregation at UNC. Epps' supporters, they insisted, were not an "'out-of-state' pressure group…working against the state of North Carolina." Neither was it true "that 'foreigners' are the main group sympathetic to Epps's case," or that "all 'good" North Carolinians favor segregation." The Supreme Court decisions made it obvious that desegregation would take place in the South, they said; the only question was whether it happened by force or through the "constructive action" of students.[82]

The University of Texas attempted another "separate but equal" measure to address the question of black student enrollment in the spring of 1950. Heman Sweatt had refused to attend UT's impromptu one-room "law school" for blacks, which was assembled off the UT campus. But the university arranged for the thirty-year old Huston Tillotson professor W. Aster Kirk to attend graduate courses offered by university professors in a room at the University Y, directly across the street from campus. Kirk arrived for this single-student "class" with UT Government professor Charles A. Timm on February 7, 1950. After a forty-five minute conversation in which Kirk explained why this arrangement was unacceptable, he recalls the professor saying "I probably would take the same course of action if I were in your shoes."[83] He provided a prepared statement to the press waiting outside the Y. In it, Kirk asserted that the issue was

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81 A more recent poll from May 1948 indicated that two-thirds (662 out of 945) of the UNC graduate student body "would not object to having Negroes in their classes." "Student Poll," *News and Observer* (Raleigh, NC, May 20, 1948).

82 John Sanders and Bill Mackie, "Letter to the Editor," *Durham Morning Herald* (Durham, NC, July 5, 1949).

83 Kirk, *One Life, Three Professional Careers*, 117.

important "to all the people of this state." If UT had met him half-way, "on the campus of the University, where I would cherish at least the feeling that I was a student there, my reaction to the whole question would be entirely different," he wrote. "*I believe I could have accepted arrangements on the University campus without establishing in the public mind that I was completely lacking in self-respect, integrity, and a sense of civic responsibility."* He concluded by stating that he still desired education from the University of Texas, but his conscience would not allow him to accept single-student off-campus coursework.[84]

When the Supreme Court ruled on the *Sweatt* case a few months later, on June 5, 1950, the University of Texas relented – but only for graduate students. Other Southern state schools, many of which faced their own legal challenges, followed Texas' lead and began to admit small numbers of black applicants for graduate and professional schools. In his first editorial as editor of the *Daily Texan,* Ronnie Dugger applauded the decision, writing, "Every human being – Christian, Jew, Negro, laborer, executive – is entitled to equal freedom within the democratic structure."[85] The paper ran op-eds from students who opposed his view in the paper's "Firing Line" section. UT Vice President James Dolley warned that the twenty-five African Americans admitted that year would "cause some students, especially freshmen girls, to stay away." He added, "The drop is expected to be very large."[86] For Heman Sweatt and the five other black students who entered the UT law school in the fall of 1950, desegregation gave them the opportunity to experience the best school in the state. It also meant constant anxiety. Some white students went out

84 Ibid., emphasis in original.

85 *Daily Texan* (Austin, TX, June 7, 1950).

86 *Daily Texan* (Austin, TX, August 1950).

of their way to interact with black students, but overall reaction was mixed. Although Sweatt wrote to Thurgood Marshall that he was surprised by the number of positive exchanges he had with white students, he was aware of hostility to his presence on campus. One evening, police investigated the burning of a makeshift cross on the edge of campus with the initials "KKK" scrawled nearby. Prominent professor, Judge Stayton dropped the practice of addressing students with the formal title "Mr." and instead referred to them by last names only to avoid addressing black students in the same way. Sweatt recalled a seminar taught by the judge in which the word "nigger" was used repeatedly. "I never heard of a case with so many niggers in it in all my life," he later said.[87]

Thurgood Marshall suggested that Sweatt seek out Dean Page Keeton, who had testified in favor of integration as dean at the University of Oklahoma Law School before he came to UT. But Keeton disliked the press attention created by Sweatt's enrollment, and he warned the first-year law student against "NAACP showmanship." Keeton recalled later that a group of white "redneck" students approached him and made a fuss about integrated bathrooms, so the Law School dean asked the black students to voluntarily use just one of the available men's rooms.[88] This response was perhaps the easiest method of diffusing tension, but it sent the message to both black and segregationist students that the complaint was legitimate enough to merit action from

87 Dwonna Naomi Goldstone, *Integrating the 40 Acres: The Fifty-Year Struggle for Racial Equality at the University of Texas* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2006), 28.

88 Ibid.

black students, rather than attitude adjustment on the part of whites. This type of informal separation was common.[89]

Southern student leaders at formerly all-white state schools looked to each other for advice on how to smoothly desegregate. In 1950, Thomas Donnelly wrote on behalf of the UNC Student government to ask the University of Virginia (UVA) Student YMCA about the reception of black students at UVA. Gregory Swanson and three other African American graduate students integrated UVA via court mandate in the fall of 1950. Wooldridge, secretary of the UVA YMCA, replied, "My answer would be that it depends on the student." He explained that Swanson was "the type of person worthy of our admiration," and that "his acceptance has been very normal and more quiet than expected." [90] He observed that Swanson knew "the precarious position in which he has been placed" and yet, had contributed a great deal as a student on campus. Wooldridge wrote that Swanson's "arrival was made easier by previous inter-racial activity on the

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89 The first black law students at UNC were asked to use the faculty restroom when they arrived in 1951. By 1957, an intercollegiate NSA group visited the UNC campus and observed that "this problem seemed to solve itself in time and now all students use the same student restroom." "The University of North Carolina," box 34, folder "Desegregation, University of North Carolina, c.1957," *Southern Project Papers.*

90 Wooldridge included a copy of the University of Virginia Alumni magazine that contained an article mentioning Swanson's admission. The article read, "Although he is the first of his race to be admitted to Mr. Jefferson's University, his presence in the student body of the law school has been quietly accepted. Not so quiet, however, has been the press attention given to his admission and speculations as to the implications of the precedent-shattering court order has been rampant. It seemed clear that the decision would be applicable to comparable state-supported graduate schools heretofore restricted to white students…." Oscar B. Wooldridge, Jr. to Thomas Donnelly, November 2, 1950, box 1, folder "John L. Sanders, President NSA November 1950-April 1951," *UNC SG Records.*

part of several organizations here." Most of all, the YMCA secretary observed, since Swanson was "admitted as a student in the University of Virginia most people believe he is entitled to the rights and privileges of a student."[91] These rights included eating at the University commons and sitting in the student section at football games, although Swanson chose to live off-campus.

When UNC admitted black graduate students in 1951, students from elsewhere began to inquire about how to generate on-campus support for desegregation at their schools. Traute Fischl, a member of the "Student Problems Committee" in the student government at Washington University in St. Louis, asked SG president Henry Bowers a series of questions about the UNC experience, in the hopes that "we can apply your successful solutions here." Fischl explained that the Washington University student government hoped to make admissions there based solely on academics in the "near term." In order to achieve this goal, he wrote, student leaders there realized that "we must show that other universities have undertaken this policy with few conflicts, and that the conflicts resulting may be easily overcome."

Fischl's committee sought strategies to confront issues that might accompany desegregation of undergraduate education at Washington University, and they inquired about any issues UNC faced with respect to dorms, restrooms, classes, dining, social activities, athletics, scholarships, and endowment repercussions.[92] Henry Bowers replied that in Chapel Hill, "student reaction has been slight and in most cases favorable to the

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91 Oscar B. Wooldridge, Jr. to Thomas Donnelly, November 2, 1950, box 1, folder "John L. Sanders, President NSA November 1950-April 1951," *UNC SG Records*.

92 Traute Fischl to President, Student Government, December 8, 1951, box 1, folder "Bowers, President, NSA October 1951-April 1952," *UNC SG Records*.

attendance of the Negro students." He reported that classrooms, the cafeteria, and seating at athletic events were not segregated. But he noted that the African American students lived in a separate wing of a campus dorm, used a separate bathroom in the Law School, did not have gym privileges, and he doubted that they would be invited to the Law School dance. This was hardly "model" integration, which Bowers acknowledged with his concluding statement, "It is the hope of many of us in Student Government that segregation in the University will be gradually broken down in the future."[93]

Student initiative in the area of desegregation made a difference. Washington University was actually far ahead of Southern schools in desegregating both its graduate and undergraduate programs; it admitted blacks to its graduate schools beginning in 1947, and black undergraduates in 1952. Moreover, it worked toward meaningful integration by desegregating its athletic programs in 1953, and its dormitories and social activities in 1954.[94] The political climate in Missouri was doubtless more favorable to desegregation than in much of the South. [95] But the thoughtful student approach that Fischl described at Washington University contributed to rapid desegregation and also prevented the replication of mistakes from other campuses.

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93 Henry Bowers to Traute Fischl, January 3, 1952, box 1, folder "Bowers, President, NSA October 1951-April 1952," *UNC SG Records*.

94 Ralph E Morrow, *Washington University in St. Louis: A History* (St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press, 1996), 463–471.

95 State leaders in North Carolina, many of whom were opposed to desegregation in the first place, feared that voluntary desegregation would prompt a backlash on UNC, the state flagship. Augustus Burns writes that they "found it necessary to pursue every legal remedy in order to pass the onus of desegregation to the federal government, a necessity which some border states could ignore." Augustus M. Burns, III, "Graduate Education for Blacks in North Carolina, 1930-1951," *Journal of Southern History* 46, no. 2 (May 1, 1980): 218.

Although contemporary accounts by administrators, scholars, and news reporters applaud the "smooth" and "uneventful" desegregation process in the South, oral interviews tell a more complex story of the day-to-day interactions of the first students to integrate Southern state schools. Harvey Beech and Floyd McKissick were two of the five black students to integrate the University of North Carolina Law School in 1951, after Thurgood Marshall and Robert Carter successfully argued the Supreme Court case, *McKissick v. Carmichael*. They both recall the brisk welcome they received on campus. McKissick entered during the summer session, and was often the only black student on campus. He remembered having to "establish my right to eat" in one of the student dining rooms.[96] Beech remembered walking with a black classmate and seeing several sheriffs and deputies-in-training on campus who stood in their path, shoulder-to-shoulder, guns in hand, with looks that warned not to walk their way. The two conferred and decided they were ready to die if they had to, and they "walked within ten inches of their faces." Fortunately, the armed white officers "parted like the waters of the Red Sea." But every day presented new uncertain social situations.

No one told the black students where they could eat, and they purposefully did not approach even the friendly white students. They intentionally sat by themselves during meals. Beech remembered, "We'd go over on the end, and to know your friends, those

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96 Several white students knocked his tray out of his hands. So "I went through the line one day and made the big announcement that I intend to eat today, and I don't intend to let anybody knock any tray out of my hand anymore. I can't afford it in the first place. And I walked through that line and didn't nobody say nothing. And I stopped all that. I let them know." Oral History Interview with Floyd B. McKissick, Sr., May 31, 1989. Interview L-0040. *Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007)*, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

who might have been well-wishers, you had to go away and let them come to you. To show their intent to help, you know."[97] The black students knew that white students who interacted with them were subject to harassment, as well. McKissick explained:

> That was one of the major problems that was going on any time someone would try to befriend you or treat you nice and pick up a book for you. There would always be a little choir around to holler, "Nigger lover, nigger lover, nigger lover," and that stopped many of the whites from trying to do anything.[98]

McKissick remembered the UNC Campus Y as a particular source of support, as well as Charles Jones from the Presbyterian Church.[99] There were friendly white students associated with the Y and other organizations who definitely supported desegregation,

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97 Oral History Interview with Harvey E. Beech, September 25, 1996. Interview J-0075. *Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007)* Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

98 Oral History Interview with Floyd B. McKissick Sr., May 31, 1989. Interview L-0040. *Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007)*, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

99 The NSA intercollegiate committee who evaluated the state of integration at UNC in 1957 reported that one white pastor in the community and two student pastors took strong stands in favor of integration and lost their pastorates, as a consequence. In addition, they noted little faculty reaction, except for faculty disapproval of one white faculty who served as president of the North Carolina Patriots, or White Citizen's Council. They observed "some resentment on the part of the faculty members, not because of his opinion but because of the feeling that he was quoting out of context and misusing scientific fact." The committee also noted an "instance of regression at UNC. In the psychiatric ward of the University Hospital, both Negro and white patients were treated side by side. However, a state legislator became a weekend patient and objected strongly to this practice, and as a result it was discontinued." "The University of North Carolina," box 34, folder "Desegregation, University of North Carolina, c.1957," *Southern Project Papers.*

but he estimated that "at least fifty percent of the academic community didn't care one way or the other."[100]

The stress of living in a segregated environment was difficult to underestimate. McKissick remembers pranks that students directed towards him. He would open the door to his dorm room, which was unlocked, as per the standard honor policy, and a bucket of water would spill on him, or he would open his underwear drawer to find a dead snake. These might have been standard pranks for first-year students, but at the same time he was receiving daily threatening letters from the Ku Klux Klan telling him he should not be there as a student. Although he shrugged them off, this was not standard academic stress. He felt somewhat at ease, he said, when other students asked him to help them and be part of their study group. But even at his graduation ceremony in May of 1953, the white student slated alphabetically to be his partner in line refused to walk with him, so a white friend traded places and walked alongside him. Beech found solace in the words of commencement speaker Governor Kerr Scott, who argued that a great change was taking place that night, and that the people of North Carolina had to come out of the dark and into the light. "I was quite impressed with what he said and the way he said it," he recalled over forty years later. "Because that was the first time Blacks had ever doffed a cap and gown at Carolina. The first time." Looking back, though, he said that it made no sense to him why black students were only allowed to be students at UNC in 1951. "I never, still don't understand why I wasn't entitled to go to Carolina instead of

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100 Oral History Interview with Floyd B. McKissick, Sr., May 31, 1989. Interview L-0040. *Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007)* Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

going to Morehouse. I was, had been, a Tarheel bred and a Tarheel born, you know, but I couldn't go."[101]

Black students throughout the South were asking the same questions of their state universities in the 1940s and 1950s. After the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954, campus officials at white flagships knew the days of segregation were coming to an end. But administrators and regents sought new ways to limit desegregation. A few weeks after the *Brown* decision, the University of Texas dean of admissions H.Y. McCown made no pretense about his guiding motivation in the development of a new policy of admission for black undergraduates. "If we want to exclude as many Negro undergraduates as possible," McCown suggested in a letter to President Wilson, the university could pursue a very limited policy of admitting African American undergraduates to professional programs not available at Prairie View University or Texas Southern University - only after they had spent a year taking prerequisite courses at a historically black college. "This," McCown wrote, "will keep Negroes out of most classes where there are a large number of girls."[102] Echoing the sentiments of UT Vice President James Dolley just four years before, McCown explicitly designed university policy to limit close proximity between white women and black men.

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101 Oral History Interview with Harvey E. Beech, September 25, 1996. Interview J-0075. *Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007)*, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

102 McCown to Wilson, *Chancellor's Office Records*, Box 9, folder "Negroes," Dolph Briscoe Center for the Study of American History, The University of Texas at Austin. For more on this topic, see Thomas D. Russell, "'Keep Negroes Out of Most Classes Where There Are a Large Number of Girls': The Unseen Power of the Ku Klux Klan and Standardized Testing at the University of Texas, 1899-1999," in *Law, Society, and History: Themes in the Legal Sociology and Legal History of Lawrence M. Friedman*, by Robert W Gordon and Morton J Horwitz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

A few months later, however, McCown suggested a slightly less rigid admissions policy, and UT admitted seven African American students as undergraduates; two in Architecture and five in Engineering.[103] But a regent learned that admitted freshman Marion George Ford, Jr., a football star from Houston, intended to try out for the UT team. He circulated a news story to this effect to the other regents and President Wilson.[104] After a review of the course schedules of Texas Southern and Prairie View, President Wilson decided that the seven admitted students could in fact complete their desired professional degrees at those schools instead. At the behest of the Regents and President Wilson, Dean McCown rescinded admission to what would have been the first black undergraduates at UT at the end of August 1954. The rejection letter advised the youths to take their introductory courses at one of the two state-supported black colleges, Prairie View University or Texas Southern University, instead. [105]

Thus, the university clung to a strict interpretation of its old admissions policy, delaying any change that the *Brown* decision implied – all to avoid the possibility of an African American student trying out for the football team. *Daily Texan* editor Shirley Strum attacked the administration's decision, writing "Desegregation must come. The main building lauds that the 'Truth shall make you free.' It does not label this truth 'for whites only.'"[106] President Wilson apparently called Strum after she published the

103 "First Negro Undergrad to Enter UT This Fall," *Daily Texan* (Austin, TX, August 24, 1954).

104 Leroy Jeffers to Tom Sealy, August 25, 1954, *UT President's Office Records*, VF20/B.A, General Files, Folder "Negroes in Colleges, 1939-54," Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin.

105 A friend and classmate of Ford's at Wheatley High School was Barbara Jordan, who would attend Texas Southern University.

106 Shirley Strum, *Daily Texan* (Austin, TX, September 16, 1954).

editorial, notifying her that the legislature was in town, the university had "major needs," and that he didn't want to see anything in the campus paper that would "mess things up."[107] Seventeen-year old Marion Ford was stunned by the reversal, and he tried to contact chairman of the board of regents Tom Sealy to get an explanation. Regent Sealy stated that the registrar had acted under "an erroneous impression" when he admitted Ford and the other black students as undergraduates.[108] Ford commented to a reporter that he was proud to be a Texan, but "when things like this come about, how can I stay proud?"[109] The decision seemed arbitrary and cruel, considering the fact that it arrived just days before the beginning of the school year and it would be difficult to apply elsewhere at such a late date. Ford argued, "In a few years there will be hundreds of Negro students at the university. Why hold me back for this one year?[110] He pledged to find another way to attend UT, though he acknowledged that court action would be a waste of time. "Frankly I don't want to go to Prairie View," he insisted. "I plan to make chemical engineering my life and I want the best instruction available. That is why I chose the University of Texas." Like many other black southerners barred from attending

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107 Copp and Rogers, *The Daily Texan*, 67.

108 Accordingly, McCown's rejection letter clarified, "We will admit Negroes for work in graduate and professional schools," but for entry-level courses "it is not our policy to compete with them for Negro students."

109 "Negro Appeals Turn-Down at University," *Brownsville Herald*, September 3, 1954.

110 "Negro to Try Again to Attend U of Texas," *UP Wire Story from unidentified newspaper*, September 3, 1954, http://standinsanddirtynothings.files.wordpress.com/2011/05/marion-ford.jpg.

their flagship universities, the honors graduate would ultimately seek his degree out of state.[111]

The University of Texas finally addressed the question of who could be a student on its campus in the fall of 1956, when it admitted its first class of African American undergraduates. It made news as one of the first Southern state schools to do so, enrolling 104 black students, including 30 freshman, 55 graduate students, and 19 transfer students.[112] At the same time, the university made an even more controversial move; it revoked its longstanding open admissions policy and instituted a merit-based exam instead. From its beginnings in 1883, the university maintained open enrollment

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111 Ford received his undergraduate degree in chemical engineering from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and returned to Texas to become the first African American to graduate from the University of Texas Dental School in 1963. He was a lifelong dentist and oral surgeon in Houston, but had extensive international connections. He was the nation's first Fulbright Fellow to Germany in Periodontics, and he studied and taught dentistry at the University of Bonn in Germany. He volunteered for the Peace Corps, worked to establish dental care clinics in East Africa, and consulted with the Indonesian and Tanzanian governments on developing medical facilities in those nations.

112 Many sources cite The University of Texas at Austin as the first state school in the South to admit African American undergraduates. Had UT allowed Marion Ford, Jr., and his classmates to matriculate in 1954, this might have been the case. Some schools did not keep information on "first" black graduates, and sources conflict in their facts. The University of West Virginia graduated its first black undergraduate, Jack Hodges, in 1953. Hodges was editor of the campus newspaper. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the University of Virginia, and the University of Arkansas admitted black undergraduates in 1955. Although short-lived, the University of South Carolina was technically the "first" in this area; it was the only Southern state school to admit black undergraduates during the Reconstruction era, and South Carolina native Thomas McCants Stewart transferred from Howard University to USC in 1874 to earn a BA degree in art and the law in 1875. See http://www.twilightandreason.com and Slater, "The First Black Graduates of the Nation's 50 Flagship State Universities."

for all white Texans. After World War II, however, new students enrolled in droves, creating a legitimate need to find some way to limit admissions. While the new merit-based policy ostensibly addressed the postwar surge in enrollment at UT, it also achieved an administrative and political goal of minimizing admissions of black undergraduates.

This dual purpose of the merit-based admissions policy is evident in the deliberations of a four-person advisory committee, chaired by Professor Harry Ransom, who prepared a confidential report for President Wilson before their first meeting on June 15, 1955.[113] A comparison of the aptitude test scores of University of Texas freshman with those of three black colleges in Texas indicated that the median for African Americans was 54, while the median score for white students was 102. The committee knew that implementing standardized testing as part of the admissions process would limit minority enrollment, as the report states clearly in a footnote.[114] But the committee omitted this explicit discussion of racial consequences in the final report. The new admissions policy proved especially unpopular among alumni and Texans generally,

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113 H. H. Ransom *et al.* to Logan Wilson, June 22, 1955, *UT Chancellor's Office Records*, Box 34, Folder "Committees--Standing, Admissions Committee," Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin.

114 The report estimated that out of the 56,363 high school graduates in Texas in 1954, 11% were African American. "If 2,700 freshmen were distributed according to these percentages," the report notes, "300 of them would be Negroes. Cutting point of 72 would eliminate about 10% of UT freshmen and about 74% of Negroes. Assuming the distributions are representative, this cutting point would tend to result in a maximum of 70 Negroes in a class of 2,700—one-fourth of one-ninth of the class." H. H. Ransom *et al.* to Logan Wilson, June 22, 1955, *UT Chancellor's Office Records*, Box 34, Folder "Committees--Standing, Admissions Committee," Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin.

however, who argued that it was "elitist" and unfair, since all taxpayers who desired to do so should have a chance to attend the school.[115]

Black Texans had made this "equal access for taxpayers" argument for many years, of course. By drawing the ire of white alumni, the merit-based admissions policy had the effect of appearing racially neutral on its face. Though UT was officially integrated in 1956, the first black students found that it was a long way from true integration. The Human Relations Commission of the UT Student Association reported that black students dropped out of school at an alarming rate; their "basic complaint was that there was nothing for them to do but go to school, study, eat, and sleep."[116] They could eat at some campus restaurants but almost none off-campus, join the YM/YWCA but few other private social organizations, and play intramural sports, but not wrestling or swimming, which UT pre-emptively cancelled on the advice of the dean of services H.Y. McCown. Students could participate in social events at the student union, and similarly, McCown recommended that dances no longer take place.[117] Black students would have

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115 One 1955 alumni complained to Wilson that UT was acting like Great Britain by opting to limit enrollment rather than build more facilities. "This entrance examination business," he warned, "is one more step toward state-sponsored scholarships and the insidious approach of socialism." William D. Bryce to Logan Wilson, n.d., (received July 12, 1955), *UT Chancellor's Office Records*, Box 34, Folder "Desegregation," Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin.

116 Almetris Marsh Dureen and Louise Iscoe, *Overcoming: A History of Black Integration at the University of Texas* (Austin: University of Texas, 1979), 6. For more on integration at the University of Texas at Austin, see Goldstone, *Integrating the 40 Acres*.

117 H.Y. McCown to Logan Wilson and C.P. Boner, *UT Office of the Dean of Student Services Records*, Box VF29/Db, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin.

to fight for several years for access to desegregated university housing, and longer still for the ability to play on UT athletic teams, eat at restaurants off-campus, or attend movies at local theaters.[118]

It did not take long for students to challenge the second-class status assigned to blacks on campus. The University of Texas drew national and international headlines in 1957 when it ousted music student Barbara (Conrad) Smith from the lead role in the opera *Dido and Aeneas*, in which she was scheduled to star opposite a white male lead. Smith was among the first class of black undergraduate students to integrate the university during the 1956-1957 school year. She transferred to UT as a junior from Prairie View University, writing that she was "aware of the great need for better trained musicians for my people and felt that the University was the school in Texas that was best equipped to prepare me for this work."[119] She began to receive threatening calls after she was cast in October, sometimes as often as three times a week, including from a state legislator's wife. Politicians from East Texas in particular spoke out against the depiction of an interracial couple, and black women across campus called themselves "Barbara" to shield their friend from retribution. President Wilson directed the music

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118 Dureen and Iscoe, *Overcoming*, 6. For histories on desegregating intercollegiate athletics, see Lane Demas, *Integrating the Gridiron Black Civil Rights and American College Football* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2010); Richard Pennington, *Breaking the Ice: The Racial Integration of Southwest Conference Football* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1987); Charles H. Martin, "The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow in Southern College Sports: The Case of the Atlantic Coast Conference," *North Carolina Historical Review* (July 1999): 253–284; Charles H. Martin, "Racial Change and 'Big-Time' College Football in Georgia: The Age of Segregation, 1892-1957," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* (Fall 1996): 532–562.

119 Nancy McMeans, "Barbara Smith Came to UT for Education," *Daily Texan* (Austin, TX, May 9, 1957).

dean, E. William Doty, to remove her from the opera several months before the performance, though Smith only learned of the decision two weeks before the opening night.

Dean Doty explained that Smith's personal safety and possible cuts to university appropriations from the legislature factored into the decision, Smith later recalled.[120] Not long after the controversy became public, Smith tried to quiet it by writing in the *Daily Texan* that "after the first shock and hurt had passed, I began to realize that the ultimate success of integration at the University was much more important than my appearance in the opera. I did not seek the publicity I have received. I do not wish any more. I just want to go back to being a student." She pledged her support for the administration's attempts to "achieve the most harmonious fulfillment of integration at the University."[121] On many students' minds was Autherine Lucy, who had attempted to integrate the University of Alabama that same year, but a violent mob drove her from campus, and the board of trustees suspended and then expelled Lucy "for her own safety." Closer to home, white mob action in the fall of 1956 prevented black students from entering Mansfield High School and Texarkana Junior College in East Texas. Governor Allan Shivers called in the Texas Rangers to keep the peace, but they declined to assist black students to school. Both remained segregated.[122] Further, the Texas state legislature debated a series of segregationist laws, including a miscegenation law, that year.

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120 Ibid.

121 Ibid.

122 Numan V Bartley, *The New South, 1945-1980* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1995), 195–196.

Despite the charged atmosphere in the state, black and white students alike protested the decision to remove Smith from the production, which President Wilson said he made "without pride or apology."[123] The Young Democrats and the Young Republicans met in a joint session at the Student Y and passed resolutions that sought an explanation from President Wilson for his decision. They requested that Smith be allowed to perform off-campus, and called for an investigation into the facts surrounding her ouster, as well as any other administrative actions to "remove duly qualified and selected students from various campus activities."[124] The Student Assembly passed a resolution asserting the rights of "all bona fide students" to "equal opportunity to participate in campus activities, both curricular and extra-curricular." They asked the regents and administration to keep these "considerations in mind when making future decisions in the area of integration."[125]

The administration's refusal to treat Smith as an equal student continued to strike a chord with UT students, as the Texas Cowboys, the Silver Spurs, and the Latin American students group spoke out in her favor. Over fifteen hundred (out of a student population of 16,950) and eighteen faculty members signed a petition protesting President's Wilson's decision, the largest number of signatures for any issue in campus history. Effigies of the two most vocal segregationist state legislators appeared on

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123 Lewis L. Gould and Melissa R. Sneed, "Without Pride or Apology: The University of Texas at Austin, Racial Integration, and the Barbara Smith Case," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 103, no. 1 (July 1, 1999): 66–87.

124 "Young Demos, Republicans Urge Discrimination Prove," *Daily Texan* (Austin, TX, May 9, 1957).

125 "Assembly Votes 'Yes' on 'Smith' Resolutions," *Daily Texan* (Austin, TX, May 10, 1957).

campus and at the capitol with the banner "Demagogues – Chapman and Sadler." And students marched, most for the first time in their lives, to protest the unjust treatment of a fellow student.[126] Bud Mims, a white Texan who attended the University from 1954 to 1959 and served as editor of the campus newspaper, recalled the incident as a touch point for white student activism on campus. Many students, he said, believed firmly in "equality, human rights, being just good human beings" and "accepting human beings." The university setting cultivated those values, and through student government and the Student Y in particular, he noted, white students tried to create a "welcoming" environment for the first black undergraduates. But the Smith incident "made many students more determined to organize and do something." Mims connects this resolve to "doing what we could to further human rights" as impetus for white student support for pickets, sit-ins, and forms of direct action.[127]

Intercollegiate information sharing added force to student arguments for equal rights.[128] The preamble to the University of Texas student constitution declared that one of its core purposes was "to allow students participation in the overall decision-making processes of the University." Countering reluctant administrators and intransigent regents was not easy, however. Frank Cooksey, president of the UT Student's Association from 1959 to 1960, acknowledged while in office that students were limited by the amount of facts they find to support their proposals. "Our full-time jobs as

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126 Dorothy Dawson Burlage phone interview with the author, March 2010, taped, in author's possession.

127 Bud Mims interview for the "When I Rise" documentary. Excerpted online at: http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/when-i-rise/extras.html

128 Personal contacts with administrators and Regents through organizations such as the UT Friar (honorary) society provided one avenue for informal lobbying as well.

students put us at a disadvantage" vis-à-vis the administration, whose jobs allowed them greater access to information.[129] But Cooksey argued that student government was "much more effective than most of its critics think." Cooksey contacted the UNC student government head Charles Gray in 1959, seeking information on how to desegregate campus housing facilities that he could present at the upcoming meeting of the UT Board of Regents. "It is our understanding that the University of North Carolina has already pioneered this step," he said. "We are most interested in the problems you faced, your solutions, and residual effects, if any." Cooksey sought specific details on UNC student reaction, violence, alumni pressure for or against, which he was able to use as precedent when he advocated for desegregating housing at the University of Texas.[130] Throughout this era, the connections between students that the NSA and the Campus Y forged were instrumental in facilitating such vital information-sharing.

GENTLEMANLY CONDUCT

The emergence of the democratic notion of the "citizen-student" in the postwar years empowered youth who argued in favor of greater rights. But it had the potential to conflict with older codes and traditions of so-called "gentlemanly conduct" on Southern campuses. Both concepts conveyed specific racial and gender connotations which changed over time. "Citizen-student" is a term that first circulated as veterans, most of whom were men, comprised the majority of the student population. It implied participation in the life of the nation and full membership in society. Young Americans

129 *Daily Texan* (Austin, TX, November 22, 1959).

130 Frank Cooksey to President, Student's Association, October 29, 1959, box 1, folder "Charles Gray, President, April 1959-March 1960," *UNC SG Records*.

shared a belief in the necessity of deliberate, responsible action as students. The notion of gentlemanly conduct described the code of honor and often patriarchal campus traditions that students at many colleges ascribed to from the beginning of the university system in the United States. In practice, gentlemanly conduct at state flagships meant whatever the majority of white men on campus considered to be honorable.[131] The notion of the citizen-student was more inclusive in theory, signifying neither race nor gender. In practice, men, especially former servicemen, tended to hold leadership positions and to be more vocal, with the notable exception of the University YWCA's. The ideas of citizen student and gentlemanly conduct coexisted uneasily on the postwar campus, and the ways in which Southern youth utilized them illustrates a shift towards democratizing campus life and the very meaning of what it meant to be a student.

To be sure, the fact that the Texas Cowboys, a UT men's service organization founded in 1922, spoke in favor of Barabara Smith after her ouster from a student production in 1956 was a positive step. But at the same time, the Texas Cowboys, all white, continued their longstanding tradition of holding a yearly minstrel show in which members performed in blackface before the Texas-Texas A &M football game, either unaware or uncaring that the depiction was insulting. UT students first protested the show in 1957, and an interracial group circulated a petition requesting an end to the shows in 1960. An African American graduate student, Claude Allen, commented that the petition was not directed against the Cowboys, "but only against that aspect of the annual show which does the damage." Black and white students held a rally in front of the student union with signs that read "Jim Crow is not funny" and "We protest Jim Crow

131 The concept, of course, was not limited to public schools; private schools, the Ivies among them, had longstanding traditions of "gentlemanly conduct" as well.

campus humor." Yet the Texas Cowboys, and many other white students on campus, appeared genuinely confused by the protest.

The Texas Cowboys prided themselves as the ambassadors of the University, whose actions were meant to encourage unity and spirit on campus. To be a Texas Cowboy was an honor, a (Texan) way of conferring "gentleman" status, and the organization strove to represent students from different backgrounds and affiliations. For the first time, this white male organization was asked to check its assumptions and to discontinue a tradition. *The Daily Texan* ran letters from students on both sides of the issue. Many whites thought the minstrel show was meant to be a joke, and didn't understand why it was offensive. One student argued that "Negro folklore and folk songs have a place in America's cultural heritage. You will find some of America's finest humor in shows of this type. This is nothing to be ashamed of." Another argued that the show contributed to "racial disharmony" on campus. When the Cowboys finally did end the minstrel show in 1965, the organization still seemed to be in a state of denial, stating that they did not realize that the show "presented an unfavorable stereotype of the Negro race on campus" and that they hoped to meet with black students to "ameliorate the situation amicably." This was new terrain for the Cowboys, many of whom were campus leaders who professed a belief in racial equality but did not recognize the way in which they exercised their racial privileges.

Increasingly, however, students scrutinized their peers' conduct against new standards reflecting the expectation of "citizen-students" in this period. The University of North Carolina prided itself on an honor code which guided the behavior of students since its founding in 1789. Honor carried with it very gendered expectations, and the maintenance of separate Honor Councils for men and women underscored this point. The honor councils adjudicated violations of the Campus Code, which differed for men and

women. Yet a joint male-female Judicial Council ruled on violations of the Honor Code, which were more serious offenses. A 1949 student handbook expressed the notion that along with privileges, membership in the academic community at Carolina "demands of the student-citizen a sense of responsibility – to himself, to his fellow students, and to the University as an enduring framework bound together by a time-honored tradition." UNC boasted many realms of activity open to students, but emphasized the primacy of "responsibility" in all those endeavors, as a method of preserving democracy on a daily, individual basis.[132] In 1957 a white UNC student participated in the burning of a cross outside of Chapel Hill. At least one other student felt compelled to report this incident to the UNC Honor Council, whose investigation found that even though it took place off campus, indeed this action was a breach of the honor code. They disciplined the student, as did the local authorities. UNC students reported that this adjudication "caused some tension among pro-segregation elements of the student body" who presumably did not believe the youth's actions warranted public rebuke by his peers.[133] But this incident suggests that some students gradually amended the old notion of "gentlemanly conduct," in which white men operated in a manner specified only by white men, to include consideration of other members of the community.

One area related to "gentlemanly conduct" which changed slower than others was the differential between men and women on campus. Undergraduate education at the University of Texas was coeducational in the 1940s and 1950s. But like most coed

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132 "Carolina, Self-Governing Community," June 1949, box 1, folder "William E. Mackie, President May 1949-March 1950), *UNC SG Records*.

133 "The University of North Carolina," box 34, folder "Desegregation, University of North Carolina, c.1957," *Southern Project Papers*.

colleges in the country, men held the majority of top leadership posts on campus. World War II created a brief opening for women's leadership, and the first two women editors of the *Daily Texan* and the first woman Student Association president held office during this time.[134] Between 1944 and 1961, six women would serve as the editor of the *Daily Texan*. Though some of them conscientiously tried to cut down on the number of "most beautiful students on campus" features, nevertheless, the postwar social separation of men and women was just as prominent at UT as at other southern campuses. The sections of the paper reflected this division; there was a society section, an intramurals page, a world news section, half -page devoted to wedding announcements named "Rings on Their Fingers," and a section about fraternity activities called "Greek Gambits." The campus paper ran articles about housekeeping and opportunities for students' wives, who had their own (non-student) organization. Marti Valiant McLain, a student at UT from 1952 to 1957, remembers that incoming freshmen women endured a "posture test" when they first enrolled. This was not just a one-time evaluation; the *Daily Texan* advertised an annual Posture Contest each year, in which faculty members judged a competition between sororities and independent groups.[135] McLain lived in the private all-women's Scottish Rite dormitory that still stands on the north edge of campus. Parents who sent their daughters there expected them to live like proper ladies, she recalled. "Coeds" were not allowed to leave the building with bare legs, so she and her friends would use an ink pen to draw a "seam" on the back of each other's calves so that it looked as if they were

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134 The first female president of student government was not elected; as vice president, she became president when the current president resigned his post for military service, which happened frequently during the war years.

135 "Posture Contest Set for January." *The Daily Texan*, December 21, 1960, 7.

wearing stockings.[136] But informal restrictions and traditions were almost as effective as specific rules.

Campus traditions reinforced and even exaggerated cultural gender divisions. In 1955, editor Shirley Strum bemoaned the never-ending series of beauty features and contests in the *Daily Texan*. Women competed for the "Sweetheart nominations, Aquafest carnival, Varsity Queen, Most Beautiful Freshmen, Ten Most Beautiful, UT Sweetheart," and others, usually in a bathing suit or ball gown. In a column called "Bachelor of Beauty," Strum lamented, "It makes one wonder why we're in the University anyway."[137] Strum's colleague at the *Texan*, Bud Mims, recalled that even in the Journalism school, which was more liberal than most other departments, the professors and students alike were notorious for their sexism. He recalled, "The really memorable time was when Paul J. Thompson (founder of the J-School) held forth on the crowning benefit a newspaper career held for young women: 'When you get married,' he told my female colleagues, 'you'll have a write-up in the newspaper as big or bigger than any society girl in town.'"[138] Likewise, Marti McClain recalls speaking with Dean Page Keeton about her interest in attending law school. The dean told her that she had the

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136 McLain remembers arriving late to a biology class and taking the first open seat, which happened to be beside one of the first black undergraduate male students. She asked him if he wouldn't mind taking over the dissecting, if she would take over the note-taking, and they became good lab partners. At first glance, she reflected, she must have been exactly what he was warned to stay away from on campus, looking every bit the part of a white sorority girl in her sweater set, patent shoes, pearls, and flipped hair. They became friends and he went on to become a doctor in Texas. Marti Valiant McLain interview with the author, November 21, 2007, Austin, TX, taped, in author's possession.

137 Shirley Strum, "Bachelor of Beauty," *Daily Texan* (Austin, TX, January 11, 1955).

138 Copp and Rogers, *The Daily Texan*, 67.

grades, but she was much too pretty for the legal profession. Law school, he explained, was only suitable for more homely girls who were less likely to marry and would need a career to provide for themselves.[139]

The University of Texas reflected the assumptions of the larger society when it came to differences between the sexes, but it was also in some ways an exception, as few Southern flagship universities were as open to women's enrollment as UT in this period. It was no mistake that "gentlemanly conduct" described the set of expectations for students on many campuses, because men were the "standard" and women the minority. Importantly, women did not face legal restrictions barring their admission. It was illegal for blacks and whites to go to school together in the South, and after the *Sweatt* and *Brown* decisions, it remained controversial. But the notion of young unmarried men and women interacting on equal footing was also a novel concept to many southerners. So novel, perhaps, that formal legal restrictions were unnecessary to prevent women's access. Even at UT, where women arguably held more leadership posts than at other co-ed schools, the notion of female leadership evoked the stress of wartime conditions. Campus papers in this period exhibited a constant awareness of the possibility of another world war, and consequently, the sudden departure of male students. During the Korean conflict, Universal Military Training began in January 1951, and 400 UT students were among the 480,000 18-year olds who enlisted. A reporter observed, "*The Texan* is trying hard to believe that its manpower position will not be in the same condition as it was during WWII. But it looks like the campus is in for another female editor." He added:

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139 Marti Valiant McLain interview with the author, November 21, 2007, Austin, TX, taped, in author's possession.

"Is that bad?"[140] Women acting as "place holders" while men fought wars was typical, but the ambivalence of the reporter's last comment indicates a slight openness to a departure from the prevailing gender ideologies of the South.

Indeed, the potentially radicalizing implications of the citizen student model presented rare opportunities for social change in an otherwise profoundly conservative social climate. John Hunsinger, an engineering major and football player, became active in student government and NSA during his undergraduate years at Georgia Tech from 1950 to 1955. He participated in NSA activities because of the opportunities to swap ideas with students nationally and internationally. In so doing, he became friends with "liberal" students and women students. He recalled that he and his classmates (all male), however, were extremely reluctant to "opening" their school to women. Georgia Tech graduates, he said, "made more money than those of any other college in the South," and saw college as a place to obtain a quality education, get a good job, and to make connections for later life. Most male students liked Georgia Tech the way it was, and did not want it to change. In 1947, the Georgia Tech campus paper, the *Technique,* reported that although a majority of the students felt that they were missing out, they did not want the university to become coeducational, because of the "distracting influence" of women.[141] The regents debated the issue for five years, finally admitting twenty-five women in 1952, after a bitter fight and a 7-5 vote. Hunsinger recalled the prediction of one regent: "Here is where the women get their noses under the tent…We'll have home economics and dressmaking at Tech yet." Hunsinger eventually switched his position and argued on behalf of women students at the university. "But back then it was a brand

140 *Daily Texan* (Austin, TX, January 11, 1951).

141 "Coeds at Tech," *Technique* (Atlanta, GA, March 8, 1947).

new idea," he said fifty years later, "and being as conservative as we were, it took a little while for it to sink in." [142]

A common practice at Southern state flagships required women to take introductory courses at a woman's college to prove their scholastic ability to transfer as juniors. This rule was similar to the model that Southern schools imposed on African American undergraduates to restrict their numbers on campus. Thus, by the time women arrived as students, their white male counterparts had spent two years forming a cohort and developing their academic and extracurricular interests, creating niches and building seniority in campus organizations.

This was the case at UNC, where upperclassmen instilled in freshmen a respect for the "Carolina way of living," sometimes called the "Carolina spirit," which entailed autonomous student governance and student decision-making in the arenas that most affected them; academics, social regulations, and extracurricular activities.[143] UNC boasted the strongest student government in the nation, proclaiming, "Here, in this shrine to freedom of thought and action, we pride ourselves upon being members of a real community, and together with the privileges which membership in this community confers, it demands of the student-citizen a sense of responsibility – to himself, to his fellow students, and to the University." Obviously, these tenants were meant to inculcate

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142 Hunsinger contrasted the protracted battle for coeducation with the little fanfare with which it integrated in 1961. John Hunsinger, "NSA, Football, and Social Progress at Georgia Tech," in *American Students Organize: Founding the National Student Association After World War II: An Anthology and Sourcebook,* by Eugene Schwartz, 2006, 989–990.

143 The "Carolina Spirit" is not to be confused with the "Texas spirit," which visitors to the Bob Bullock Museum can learn about in the interactive "Texas Spirit: Star of Destiny" promotional presentation.

common identity and loyalty to the university, but they also emphasized the responsibility of "student-citizens" beyond campus. A 1949 student government pamphlet for incoming freshmen made this connection explicit: "Without responsibility on the part of each citizen, the freedoms enjoyed under the democratic system, whether here on campus, in the state, or in the nation, cannot long be expected to endure." [144]

The main principles of the "Carolina way of life" included adherence to an Honor Code and a Campus code of conduct. Students enforced both codes, which advocated for individual action "in a manner befitting a gentleman under all circumstances." More importantly, they also established the codes, which included social regulations against drinking, gambling, and class-cutting. Men roamed the campus with far fewer restrictions than the women, who were regarded as a protected class of students. UNC women students could only visit approved fraternities during specific hours, and only if a dean-approved chaperone accompanied them. They were not allowed to drink or to be in the presence of male students who were drinking.[145] If a woman was placed on probation by the honor court, this also entailed "social probation," meaning that she was not allowed out of her dormitory after 8 pm. Moreover, there were campus legislative rules which applied to women that did not apply to men.[146]

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144 "Carolina, Self-Governing Community," June 1949, box 1, folder "William E. Mackie, President May 1949-March 1950, *UNC SG Records*.

145 House Privilege's Board to Dean of Students, September 1949, box 1, folder "William E Mackie, President May 1949-March 1950, *UNC SG Records*.

146 If a female student resigned from her post, the Women's Council could recommend a replacement, but the replacement had to meet the approval of both the Student government president *and* the (male) leader of the political party of the resigning female student, if she belonged to one. This particular application of separate principles led the dean of women to complain to the student government president that this arrangement was unacceptable to both her office and to the Woman's

As women became a larger proportion of the university community in the late 1940s and 1950s, students began to question the logic of a dual system of activities and rules. Maintaining two systems weakened the student collective, and it created different sets of student rights for men and women. During this period students initiated the first major efforts to equalize expectations and standards for men and women, though this was contested each step of the way. An "Investigation Committee on Coed Affairs," the first in a series of such committees at UNC, collected information and began to make recommendations about areas where men and women might be better served jointly, rather than separately. In September 1949, UNC Student Body president William Mackie explained to new women students, "We are now in the process of trying to make into a living reality the single student government, envisaged by the Constitution, in which all students are full and equal citizens of the University." Mackie conceded that consolidating the men and women was difficult, but he hoped that "by the end of the year the unity will be more real than visionary, and the old division will be more nearly forgotten."[147]

UNC was not alone in trying to create a unified student government that reconciled the divisions among students. This was a top issue at two meetings of the Southern Association of Student Body presidents in 1949. Afterwards, the University of Florida asked member universities to provide an explanation of how several elements fit

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Council. If political parties could dictate appointments, the UNC Dean of Women warned, "then [the] Woman's Council lacks – or soon will lack- the necessary autonomy to successful government." Katherine Kennedy Carmichael to Jesse Dedmond, October 26, 1948, box 1, folder "Jesse Dedmond, President June 1948-April 1949," *UNC SG Records*.

147 Bill Mackie, "Statement for the Woman's Handbook," box 1, folder "William E Mackie, President May 1949-March 1950," *UNC SG Records*.

into campus politics, including women, political parties, veterans, and fraternity and independent participation.[148] Mackie replied that the UNC student body totaled 7,000 students; 6100 men, 900 women. Women were eligible to hold any elected office, but as of yet, their numbers were low. "Actually, he confided, "coeds tend to be separate, somewhat tied to [the] Dean of Women's apron-strings. This is a continuing fight. Our aim is one student government, for all students."[149]

But the process moved slower than hoped, and the debate over how much "separateness" to maintain between men and women was fought in many arenas in this era. In 1958, students protested the proposed rules for freshmen women, condemning them in the *Daily Tar Heel* as one-sided and unfair. The controversy dismayed UNC Dean of Women Kathleen Kennedy Carmichael, who called the campus editor Curtis Gans to ask that he stop publishing articles "that cause people to divide and take a stand."[150] He refused, and the public battle ensued. The rest of the administration, including the chancellor, wanted no part of the fight, so they deferred the question back

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148 Fred H. McNulty to Bill Mackie, November 9, 1949, box 1, folder "William E. Mackie, President May 1949-March 1950," *UNC SG Records*.

149 In addition to the question of women's participation, Mackie described the political landscape at UNC. There were three student political parties at UNC. One was composed of all fraternity/sorority members, while the other two were a mix of independents and fraternity members. The all-Greek party tended to have an edge, he acknowledged, because of "block support" and the difficulty of organizing independents. The Student legislature appropriated $100,000 annually from student fees, without administrative oversight. "Victory Village," the designation to the living facilities for married veterans, included 352 prefabricated army surplus homes, and 116 trailers. Bill Mackie to Fred McNulty, January 6, 1950, box 1, folder "William E. Mackie, President May 1949-March 1950," *UNC SG Records*.

150 Katherine Kennedy Carmichael to Don Furtado, April 21, 1958, box 1, folder "Donald Furtado, 1958-59" *UNC SG Records*.

to the Dean of Women. "I dislike the little boy vs. little girl feuds which have recently been occurring, Carmichael wrote student body president Donald Furtado.[151] She mentioned not only the current fight, but a public break between the men and women on the combined Honor Council the year before. She likened the struggles less to a "James Furber War of the Sexes," than to bad communication. Carmichael suggested that the student body president meet with her regularly. But she also wanted him to include a woman student in the delegation to NSA, a meeting of national prestige, so that women could be exposed to the same outside influences and have the ability to network as well. Carmichael enumerated three issues that went to the heart of the debate: the role of rules in the campus environment, what kind of environment was best for women students at UNC, and "[h]ow much difference is there between the orientation towards society of the young woman and young man at the age of eighteen?"[152] Carmichael believed that the parents of freshmen women expected the university to act in their stead. Many students, male and female, disagreed with this assessment, and they viewed it as their individual

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151 In a lengthy letter to the UNC student government president, Donald Furtado, Carmichael explained her philosophy that the college community is not a normal community. "[A]rtificially imposed rules" that regulated when students should shower, study, play music, and sleep, Carmichael suggested, were necessary to replace the absence of "naturally imposed rules" that govern society, like the demands of a career, or a crying baby. She recounted the relatively new advent of freshmen women on campus, and still only in specified medical and technological fields. From 1948 to 1956, junior and senior women did not think that freshmen women needed separate rules, since there were literally only a handful of them. By 1957, the number of freshmen women had risen to 50, and women students decided that specific freshman rules were appropriate. Katherine Kennedy Carmichael to Don Furtado, April 21, 1958, box 1, folder "Donald Furtado, 1958-59," *UNC SG Records*.

152 Katherine Kennedy Carmichael to Don Furtado, April 21, 1958, box 1, folder "Donald Furtado, 1958-59" *UNC SG Records*.

responsibility to make their own decisions and create the proper environment. Eventually the Woman's Council submitted rules that, while somewhat more relaxed, closely resembled the originally proposed rules.[153]

Students were able to quietly strip away some sex-specific rules, as in the case of the 1959 student government committee that simply deleted the campus code provision that women could not attend a fraternity function with alcohol present. But the question of separate provisions for women and men freshmen continued to generate controversy. In 1961, the female editor of the Carolina Handbook proposed the consolidation of the two handbooks for incoming students, the "Carolina Handbook" for men and the "Women's Handbook" for women.[154] Her proposal met the approval of a former editor of the Women's Handbook, but drew sharp criticisms from the Chairman of the Woman's Residence Council and the current editor of the Woman's Handbook. These three women leaders proceeded to put forth long arguments "for" and "against" the merger, which they presented to UNC women students.[155] Essentially, the debate came down to those in favor of "closeness among the women students" and those who wanted to

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153 Among other things, freshman women had to observe study hour in their dorm from 8 to 10:30 pm, had to sign out each time they left the dorm, and had to get parental permission to leave campus.

154 The "Carolina Handbook" was a guide that contained academic and social regulations, maps, and information on student government and campus activities, dining, campus groups, parking, the town of Chapel Hill, etc. New women students, both undergraduates and transfer juniors, received the "Woman's Handbook" a smaller guide that was tailored specifically to them. Costs prohibited the school from distributing both handbooks to the women.

155 Rick Overstreet to President of the Student Body, Office of the Dean of Women, Speaker of the student legislature, Chairman of Woman's Residence Council, February 1961, box 1, folder "David L. Grigg, 1960-1961," *UNC SG Records*.

"encourage a unity between men and women students" rather than "separation of the sexes." The women students at UNC split their votes equally on the proposed merger, however, so the publication board retained separate handbooks.

The University of North Carolina was just one example of a common division of campus space between women and men in the South. The academic and social culture of the University of Virginia was even more steeped in "gentlemanly" traditions, and the small numbers of women allowed to take graduate and professional courses there faced indifferent and sometimes hostile treatment.[156] Women could only enroll after taking collegiate coursework elsewhere, and if they were at least 20 years of age. They maintained their own student government, campus code, handbook, and access to one social space, called the "Coed Room," from the 1920s to the late 1950s.[157] When the university tried to eliminate the Coed Room in 1958, the president of the Women's Student Association lodged a "formal protest" and appealed to the president of the university to preserve it "[i]n the interest of democracy, in the meaningful sense of the

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156 The Dean of Women at UVA in 1927, Mary Jeffcoat Hamblin, described the bleak conditions for women on campus in this way, "[N]othing seemed to have been done for the women students. They had no gathering place and were distributed among many boarding houses around the university area. They were a sad, lonely lot. Men students were so reluctant to have a woman invade their beautiful university that they would actually stand by and either ignore or laugh at any girl whose books dropped accidentally…" From "*Breaking and Making Tradition: Women at the University of Virginia,"* University of Virginia Library exhibit.

157 Women ate lunch and held daily afternoon teas, women's student government meetings, parties, and other social activities in the Coed Room, which contained a piano, radio, card tables, magazines. An African American housekeeper named Betty Slaughter created a warm and inviting space in this room for the few women on campus. They affectionately called her "Betty Coed," and regarded her as a surrogate mother during their time at UVA.

term."[158] Women at UVA could take a limited number of courses, and only a few clubs allowed women members, including the History and International Relations Clubs.

Women students at UVA largely devised their own separate culture, quite aware of their status as interlopers on the men's university. The notion of gender-specific handbooks, student governments, and spaces for students on campus persisted much longer than the postwar period, and many women students understandably sought to maintain separate institutions, to preserve their own place on campus. The UVA women's code advised female students to remain as "inconspicuous as possible on the grounds" of the campus. Even in dress, men set the tone. "Men students at the University of Virginia, in contrast to some other coeducational institutions, have maintained the tradition of formal dress – coat and tie; therefore, it particularly behooves women to uphold their own standards." As late as the early 1960s, the UVA Women's Handbook recommended, "Look your best, feminine but not foolish." The student president of the Women's Student Association was explicit in her advice: "Women are a minority here. We feel, consequently, that women students should be at all times especially careful of their appearance and behavior on the grounds…" UVA informally capped women's admission to 10% of the student body, until a court order in 1969 imposed a three-year deadline to enact unrestricted women's enrollment. The lawsuit proved that Mary Baldwin, the state women's college, was inferior to UVA in many respects. Thus, UVA opened its doors to freshman women for the first time in 1969. Male students at UVA

158 Jo Ann M. Baum to Mr. Colgate W. Darden, Jr., May 29, 1958.

predicted the "end of the honor system" and decried the end of the "Gentleman's C [Club]."[159]

The comparison between the treatment of gender minorities and racial minorities in the postwar South is limited by the radically dissimilar historical background which undergirds the reasons for their differential treatment. But it does highlight the fragmented nature of Southern campuses, and the constant battles that students waged to establish their rights as students, and as citizens. The prevailing pre-war model of "gentlemanly conduct" prescribed a set of rules, codes, and rituals of separation that created a hierarchical Southern campus available to the privileged few before the mid-1940s. The imperative of the citizen-student questioned the legitimacy of this model and its correlating assumptions, which limited access to state-supported Southern flagships.

CONCLUSION

Young people throughout this period sought to redefine the status of college students in America. They worked to broaden their rights and civic roles, and the very definition of who could be a student. They served as the front lines in the efforts to

159 UVA fought against coeducational education until 1969, when the Board of Visitors committed to lifting restrictions on women's admission to UVA. Their plan entailed matriculating "student wives" and daughters of staff during a "transitional" year, and then gradually increasing the number of women students over a ten-year period to a maximum of 35% of the student body in 1980. That same year, four women students represented by the American Civil Liberties Union sued the university, charging that it "severely discriminates against women in its admission policies." A court order forced UVA to speed its implementation of this plan to three years; 450 women entered in 1970, 550 entered in 1971, and by 1972, there were no restrictions or quotas on female enrollment. *"Breaking and Making Tradition at the University of Virginia,"* University of Virginia Library exhibit. http://www2.lib.virginia.edu/exhibits/women/coeducation1.html

dislodge the color line in the South. The fact that their arguments transposed so easily to expanded notions of citizenship was far from accidental. College campuses in the postwar era were more than self-contained little universes in which students paraded on their own issues. In fact, through various organizations, students had contact and an awareness of issues that affected them regionally, nationally, and even internationally.

The democratizing influence of veterans in the immediate postwar period initiated a series of debates that would frame the period, including what the rights of students should be, and whom state universities should serve. Participation in NSA conferences, Student Y activities, and some campus organizations enabled white and black, male and female students to work together, if not as equals, as much closer to equal status than other areas of campus life allowed.[160] Due to its tendency to question traditional hierarchies, some southerners viewed NSA suspiciously. NSA affiliation battles revealed the aspirations of students, who viewed it as an avenue to a more meaningful and engaged collegiate experience, or as a potential threat to the status quo. Many black and some white students interpreted desegregation as a basic test of democracy, and one with great consequence for the nation's position of leadership in the world. The first black students on state-supported campuses fought for every gain in this period, countering a

160 Organizations like the Y and the NSA also provided some of the few pretexts for independent and Greek students to associate and work together in a non-competitive setting. Campus political parties often split along Greek/non-Greek lines, though this was not a precise division. At the University of Texas, the so-called "clique" dominated one political party, composed of fraternity and sorority members in the 1940s through the early 1960s. An independent political party, composed of independents and some Greek students, managed to win the Student Association presidency more often, however, though the Assembly seats were mixed. Lowell Lebermann recalls resigning as head of the Greek student party to run on the head of the Independent ticket; he won student body president this way in 1962.

social divide wrought by generations of legal racial segregation. The notion of the "citizen student" in this period contradicted the older "gentleman student" model of conduct, facilitating a subtle departure from traditional racial and gender ideologies in the South. These battles took place amid a campus landscape divided along the lines of gender, veteran status, seniority, and Greek/independent affiliation. By organizing as students, Southern youth initiated an effort toward greater democratization on the postwar campus that would reverberate into the larger society.

Chapter 3: Challenging the "Price of Peace:" The Confluence of Race and Internationalism on Southern College Campuses

A Peruvian graduate student at the University of Texas observed a fellow international student on campus in the mid-1940s. He had darker skin than she, and he routinely wore a small sign that hung on his shirt or from his belt as he walked across campus. The sign stated that he was a foreigner, not an American Negro, and that he had a right to be on campus.[1] In 1951, North Carolina native Harvey Elliott Beech enrolled at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, one of the first four black law students on campus. Beech stood in line and took a physical required of all new students and was given a swim card for the university pool. Afterwards, he met up with the other three black law students who had been escorted to a separate room, where they received their exams by a different doctor.[2] They discovered that only Beech received a student swim card. Within a few weeks, the law school dean summoned Beech to his office. The dean, embarrassed, said that the chancellor requested that he kindly give the swim card back. Beech quipped, "'Like hell, I'll return it. In fact, I don't know how to swim, so I think

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1 Leonor Castro Schofield, "Study of the Efforts of the University of Texas on Behalf of Its Foreign Students: 1940-1950" (MA Thesis, The University of Texas at Austin, 1952).

2 Beech was inspired at an early age to fight discrimination. He put himself through school and began his law studies at Morehouse College. He was part of an ongoing case by Thurgood Marshall of the NAACP to integrate the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The case took years, so Marshall had to replace the defendants several times. He finally prevailed, and Beech, J. Kenneth Lee, James Lassiter, Floyd McKissick, and James Walker became the first African American students to enroll at the UNC law school in 1951.

I'll learn.'" He later reflected that he was mistaken for an international student. "Only African-American students were denied swim cards."[3]

Student exchanges opened southern college campuses to the world in the postwar era, but they also taught undeniable lessons about American race relations. For many southern college students, these exchanges revealed the arbitrariness and moral costs of racial segregation. Over a period of years, similar experiences prompted challenging conversations between American and international students about social issues that were rarely discussed otherwise. Viewed from outside the U.S., the awkward truths of racial discrimination in the South were difficult to reconcile with fulsome American rhetoric about the importance of freedom and equality of opportunity. The presence of international students as independent observers in the midst of the ideological competition between the United States and the Soviet Union made it impossible to view southern race relations as simply a "local" matter.

This chapter traces the gradual, but increasing openness to discuss race among Southern students in the late 1940s and 1950s, when an interest in world peace often provided the context for conversations about race relations. It begins by analyzing "the price of peace" as a popular trope in both international and local racial contexts. It posits that knowledge of the world beyond U.S. borders ultimately led many students to question and challenge local systems of racial segregation. Recent historiography of this period investigates the relationship between opportunities for progressive change and

3 In 1953, Beech became the first black student to earn a degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Slater, "The First Black Graduates of the Nation's 50 Flagship State Universities," 82.

international scrutiny of American domestic civil rights and post-colonial foreign policy.[4] These studies, however, tend to focus on the words and deeds of policy and organizational elites. This chapter expands on these studies by examining the ways in which Southern students parlayed their increasing sophistication about international politics into critiques of American conceptions of race. The confluence of international and local racial issues on campus was critical to the transformation of racial ideologies in the South.

College students in the 1940s and 1950s frequently discussed the prospects for peace in the postwar world. America's young adults fought overseas to restore international peace, and afterwards they hoped to create a more secure world. Most believed that a lasting peace required diligence and responsibility on the part of individual citizens. U.S. lawmakers engaged in various efforts to "win" the peace after the war by stabilizing international and domestic relations. The Marshall Plan, NATO,

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4 These works demonstrate that decision-making government elites endorsed civil rights reform in order to achieve foreign policy goals. As the Cold War defined a world struggle between capitalist and communist countries, Soviet and Chinese propaganda highlighted the hypocrisy of American freedom rhetoric while non-white citizens did not enjoy equal rights. Race relations bore increased significance after 1945 because the U.S. emerged from the war against racist Axis regimes as the leader of the democratic world. Thus, local incidents of racial discrimination and violence became international spectacles that damaged American credibility and jeopardized the Western courtship of newly-liberated nations in the struggle against worldwide communism. In a related study, Brenda Gayle Plummer illustrates the ways that civil rights leaders used foreign criticism to influence policy reform. These leaders often linked U.S. commitment to domestic civil rights with anti-colonial struggles, and thus viewed the formation of the United Nations with high hopes. See Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy*; Layton, *International Politics and Civil Rights Policies in the United States, 1941-1960*; Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena*; Plummer, *Rising Wind: Black Americans and U.S. Foreign Affairs, 1935-1960*.

the United Nations, the GI Bill, and President Truman's Committee on Civil Rights were but a few examples of these initiatives. But peace is a nebulous concept, and ideological friends and foes invoked it as a justification for their actions during the Cold War. On postwar college campuses, many believed that peace ultimately depended on the ability of American citizens to find ways to resolve individual and group conflicts, in order to create a more democratic world.

The daily interactions and experiences of students offer insight into this complicated process of social change, which began on an individual level. This work mines Southern campus life, focusing on the flagship public universities in Texas and North Carolina, for the types of student experiences which led to changes in notions of self and community. College campuses are characterized by continual community-building among new groups of students from different backgrounds. Many of the students who attended college after World War II brought with them a strong desire and sense of urgency to ensure postwar peace. The strengthening of democratic communities was a major part of this effort, and ideas about how to accomplish this were informed by experiences of international exchange and interaction with international students. Student philanthropic initiatives also shed light on the subtle changes in perception that took place during this time, as traditional forms of racial interaction ultimately transformed into a questioning of segregation itself.

African Americans were the first to discuss these concepts together, as the Double Victory campaign invoked the Allied victory of World War II to call for equality and racial justice abroad and at home.[5] But segregation was still the law in the South, and

5 For an extended discussion of the Double Victory campaign, see Ronald T. Takaki, *Double Victory: A Multicultural History of America in World War II* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 2000).

opportunities for white and black students to interact remained scarce. As elsewhere in the country, the message of racial conciliation gained student adherents through organizations such as the Student Y and the National Student Association. This chapter considers closely the activities of students involved with Student YW/YMCAs. The Southern Student YWCA had officially desegregated its conferences in 1944.[6] The YWCA's commitment to interracial programming, led by the progressive adult women mentors involved with the Y, created an alternative model of social interaction for students who hailed from segregated communities. On many coeducational Southern campuses, the YMCA and YWCAs operated jointly to form unified Student Ys. Activities of these campus Ys often became the vanguard in transforming the habits of student thinking in the postwar American South. The Y was an important node in a network of progressive students, and students involved in the Y often held joint memberships with other campus groups. Moreover, other religious, secular, academic, and social organizations frequently partnered with the Y and utilized Y resources and facilities, bringing even more students into social orbit around these campus organizations. Student Ys were central to organizing and creating space for the kinds of conversations that led Southern students to associate issues of international peace and local racial justice.

Most Southern colleges remained segregated in the 1940s and 1950s, but the increasing arrival of international students expanded Southern students' concept of community. World War II had stoked the interest of American college students in their counterparts abroad, and this curiosity matched a desire to prevent future conflict.

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6 Lynn, *Progressive Women in Conservative Times*, 43.

Students' heightened intellectual engagement with international issues found expression in a wide variety of campus activities, and some students simultaneously sought international exposure through organized academic and social gatherings as well as exchange programs. These activities and growing networks fostered the exchange of ideas between American and international college students. While southern students looked outward to the world at large, they were cognizant of the world looking back at them, and their communities.

THE PRICE OF PEACE

The "price of peace" was a concept that struck a familiar chord among a generation shaped by the twin cataclysms of the Great Depression and the Second World War. The reference usually implied personal sacrifice for the good of a larger community, and it had both local and international significance. For many Americans, the "price of peace" signified the argument against returning to America's prewar isolationism. In 1956, for example, Charles Bolté published *The Price of Peace: A Plan for Disarmament*, calling for a new direction in American foreign policy.[7] Bolté was the founder of the American Veterans Committee (AVC), a group of World War II veterans who advocated progressive social causes, including equal treatment for African Americans, as well as world cooperation to prevent another war.[8] The path to

[7] Charles G Bolté, *The Price of Peace; a Plan for Disarmament* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1956), 104.

[8] The AVC's slogans, "Citizens First, Veterans Second," and "We fight for what we fought for," expressed the beliefs of many young veterans on college campuses. The AVC initially drew a wide swath of support, even enrolling a young Ronald Reagan. They championed greater opportunities for labor, students, and African Americans in postwar communities. See Chapter 2.

international peace, Bolté believed, required forgoing illusory "victory" through mutual destruction and the nuclear arms race.[9] He advocated pursuing American interests within a new, binding international framework that would include self-imposed rules of conduct and the voluntary renunciation of the use of violence to resolve international disputes.[10] Bolté advocated for joint disarmament, strengthened alliances, and a reliance on diplomacy to attain international harmony. Some Americans viewed Bolté's views as unrealistic "peace rhetoric" that unwittingly played into Soviet strategy. By the late 1940s and 1950s, internationalism of this variety was certainly no longer as popular as it had been in the years immediately following the war. Students on college campuses, however, were among the few to sustain the ideological view that international cooperation was necessary to avoid war and coexist with adversaries in a nuclear world.

The "price of peace" was also frequently invoked within the context of local interpersonal conflicts. A year after the Supreme Court's 1954 decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, Dr. Guy B. Johnson described to the American Sociological Association the local conditions which had created "a quiet revolution in the traditional pattern of race relations in the South." [11] Johnson was a sociologist at the University of

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9 Bolté took specific issue with the doctrine of mutual assured destruction, citing the words of President Truman, President Eisenhower, and others, as evidence that the present course of military buildup was unsustainable and wasteful of societal resources. The advent of "nationalism, intensified by ideology," Bolté argued, was a comparatively recent historical development, but it threatened to end civilization in "a Thirty Minutes' War." Bolté, *The Price of Peace; a Plan for Disarmament*, 101–104.

10 Ibid., 100.

11 Johnson traced the beginnings of desegregation in the South to the court-mandated admission of a black law student at the University of Maryland in 1935. Guy B. Johnson, "Racial Integration in Southern Higher Education," September 1, 1955. From Box 2 "Campus Y – unprocessed," Folder: Historical Overview of the Y

North Carolina at Chapel Hill who specialized in the desegregation of Southern institutions of higher education. He was a scholar of African American culture, and the first executive director of the progressive Southern Regional Council. Although Johnson was a white Southern liberal who genuinely supported racial equality, he reluctantly concluded that social dualism was a necessary concession in order to maintain racial peace on newly integrated college campuses. Johnson believed that "[o]rderly and peaceful transition" to desegregated education would only come at the cost of continued segregation in campus living accommodations, dances, and social fraternities. While he acknowledged that separate social worlds based on race were particularly frustrating to black students who sought equal treatment, he nevertheless insisted that social dualism was, "so to speak, the price of peace."[12] In real terms, this meant that black students paid the proverbial "price" in terms of restricted opportunity. Yet, in the mid-1950s, most Southern progressives shared Johnson's gradualist mindset, believing that a moderate approach to racial integration was the best way to prevent violent reaction from segregationist whites.[13]

University Archives, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. See also Guy B. Johnson, "Racial Integration in Southern Higher Education," *Social Forces* 34, no. 4 (May 1, 1956): 309–312.

12 Guy B. Johnson, "Racial Integration in Southern Higher Education," September 1, 1955. From "Campus Y – unprocessed," Folder: Historical Overview of the Y *University Archives,* Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. See Ibid.

13 Racial gradualism was a sentiment shared by white and black liberals. Notable exceptions included prominent African American scholars(list), and a small number of white activists. Lillian Smith, author of *Strange Fruit* (1944), had long criticized the Southern Regional Council for its gradual approach to racial integration and its reluctance to strongly condemn all forms of segregation due to, she argued, a desire to appeal to white municipal and business interests. See also Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, *Revolt Against Chivalry: Jessie Daniel Ames and the*

Charles Bolté and Guy Johnson utilized similar sociological concepts to consider the optimal conditions necessary to change social dynamics and patterns of human aggression. Bolté interpreted the continuing challenges to international harmony as stemming from basic problems of human nature. "Is the human race," he asked, "mature enough to accept this new condition for its continued existence? Are we community-minded enough to subject ourselves to real external restraints on our acts?"[14] Johnson was doubtlessly aware that most Americans construed the "price of peace" within the context of foreign relations and diplomacy, rather than domestic race relations. His analysis differed in scope, but he also explored concepts of self and community, along with the limits of what might be termed "human maturity." For both Charles Bolté and Guy Johnson, the "price of peace" ultimately described the search for a way that humans could live together – in both international and local communities. For students, the contradictions inherent in working towards international peace while simultaneously constructing social dualism on campus created greater awareness of the personal costs of "the price of peace" in the South.

THE IMPULSE TO GIVE: PATERNALISM AND PHILANTHROPY

Charitable efforts remained one of the few accepted avenues for whites and blacks to interact publicly in segregated campus communities in the immediate postwar South. This was especially the case between African American men and white women. Paternalistic charity was an important form of social distancing between whites and

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Women's Campaign Against Lynching (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

14 Bolté, *The Price of Peace; a Plan for Disarmament*, 100.

blacks in the prewar South. In its "ameliorative" qualities, this charitable impulse was supportive of the racial status quo; a form of noblesse oblige that recruited Southern whites and particularly white women, as upholders of the South's social code of racial difference. This form of charitable contact continued after the war, but the tradition behind it began to change as a result of World War II and subsequent student interest in internationalism. American students donated money and resources for students abroad after the war, in a manner that differed only slightly from traditional modes of charitable giving in their local communities. Gradually during this period, however, student charity broadened to become what might be called "philanthropy," predicated on more direct contact between the giver and the recipient, and focused more on actual needs and the desire for a connection to the recipient, than on observing the archaic and often self-serving rituals of white benevolence. Its goals were broader—it actively sought social improvement, and it recognized the existence of a larger, unified social system in ways that older forms of charity did not. This form of philanthropy attempted to reduce the social distance between giver and recipient because of its recognition of a connected, if not integrated, community. Finally, this new philanthropy was not predicated on mere material aid—the mainstay of traditional charity—but rather on social advancement. It began to actively acknowledge need as a product of social injustice, and to address it within this larger moral context.

This postwar philanthropic dynamic, which first took hold in relationships between white Southern students and international students, soon began to carry over to relationships between black and white southerners. On postwar Southern campuses, philanthropy thus became an important fulcrum of social change, and a bridge between the socially distant charity of the prewar South and the active participation of Southern white students on behalf of greater racial equality. This "active" philanthropy certainly

predated World War II, but became increasingly visible in the late 1940s and 1950s. The gradual valorization of personally engaged "philanthropy" over more removed forms of "charity" marked an important turning point in Southern racial history—particularly in light of the increasing internationalization of postwar Southern campuses. As student notions of their communities' boundaries and members expanded, campuses soon became centers of ferment for social change and civil rights, and white college students became social, if not political, leaders in their communities.

War relief work and fundraising became a popular cause for intercollegiate collaboration throughout the postwar period. In 1946, Smith student body president Allison Butler wrote UNC student body president Charles Vance requesting information on successful student war relief efforts. Given the prospect of mass starvation in many parts of the world, she said, Smith sought ways that American students could work together "as a mass collegiate movement."[15] She enclosed a bulletin of the efforts of the Smith faculty-student Relief Committee, sent to 2000 American colleges, in the hope that "students at all colleges can strengthen each other's work by exchange of information, and, even more important, by taking direct action together." Butler also invited UNC to send delegates to a conference on the topic, and asked for Vance to use his "combined student influence" to make Congress and the local community aware of the pressing international needs. "In this way," she wrote, "we may persuade the nation to meet a crisis which will determine the future of the world's youth."[16]

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15 Allison Butler to Charles Vance, May 24, 1946, box 1, folder "Charles F. Vance, Jr. Pres November 1945-July 1946," *UNC SG Records*.

16 Allison Butler to Charles Vance, May 24, 1946, box 1, folder "Charles F. Vance, Jr. Pres November 1945-July 1946," *UNC SG Records*.

Students engaged in numerous relief activities, through new and established organizations. In 1948, UT Student body president Barefoot Sanders wrote UNC student president Jesse Dedmond requesting that Carolina consider starting a book campaign for a foreign country along the lines of the successful "Books for China" program at UT. Sanders sent a "simplified step-by-step plan" for the program based on the UT model, pioneered by a former Chinese exchange student, and noted that Southern Methodist University and the universities of Michigan and Nebraska had already utilized this blueprint. He explained that the project's intent was to "build up international good will," and in two years UT had sent more than 17,000 volumes to replenish the libraries of war-torn China. "In building up the libraries of these countries with American books," Sanders explained, "the democratic spirit will be instilled in a way that money alone could not do."[17] The UT "how to" guide provided practical suggestions on logistics and motivating campus and community support, as well recommendations including "Screen your books closely. Send only that which will serve a useful purpose. Bad books will tear down good will." [18]

Schools large and small throughout the South sought ways to build goodwill with college students in other parts of the world. They raised money annually for the World Student Service Fund, but they also conducted local hands-on projects to connect with

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17 Barefoot Sanders to the President of the Student Body, December 15, 1948, box 1, folder "Jesse Dedmond, President, NSA June 1948-April 1949," *UNC SG Records*.

18 The guide also advised, "Be sure to stamp all your books. UT uses the stamp 'Donated to the students of China and the Philippine Islands by the students and faculty of The University of Texas and the townspeople of Austin.'" Barefoot Sanders to the President of the Student Body, December 15, 1948, box 1, folder "Jesse Dedmond, President, NSA June 1948-April 1949," *UNC SG Records*.

their international counterparts. The Student YWCA at LaGrange College, an all-white women's academy in Georgia, hosted two guest lecturers in 1948 who urged the young women to view themselves as part of a wider community, and to become involved in it. The first was an international student from China who spoke on the importance of student contributions to the World Student fund drive. [19] The other was Rosalie Oakes, the regional student YWCA director in the South from 1945 to 1954. Oakes, a young white woman from Virginia, worked tirelessly during the early postwar era to spark the social consciences of southern white students in various leadership posts with the YWCA.[20]

LaGrange students, like so many of their peers, responded positively to this message of social responsibility, and found ways to contribute locally and internationally. For instance, as part of the Student Y charitable efforts at LaGrange in 1948, students sent boxes of food and clothing to Poland and to France. They also donated Thanksgiving gifts to a local "Negro Nursery." These parallel efforts suggest that Southern students were beginning to view international and local "others" in similarly sympathetic terms. But racial hierarchies continued to shape local charity according to the distinct contours that had traditionally patterned social relationships in the South. Although the national student YWCA officially adopted racial equality as a central plank before the end of World War II, such egalitarianism was an alien and even radical concept on many campuses.[21] Moreover, LaGrange's segregation continued to limit the

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19 http://www.lagrange.edu/resources/yearbooks/1948.pdf Accessed May 10, 2009. See Chapter 2 for a discussion of the World Student Service.

20 Oakes worked with the Student Y in Kentucky during World War II, led the Student Y at the University of Texas at Austin in the late 1950s, and then spent a decade organizing women with the Y in South Africa in the 1960s and 1970s.

21 On some campuses, like LaGrange, Mississippi State College for Women, and others, the college administration automatically included all women students as members

interactions of blacks and whites, and to underscore class differences. The LaGrange yearbook, for example, included among its images of smiling young white women in ball gowns a photo of five African American employees and a child with the caption, "Santa Claus has come to town for dormitory parties, sorority parties, and our traditional Christmas party for the servants."[22] These expressions of beneficence reinforced class and race-specific notions of Southern womanhood. Thus, young Southern white women of privilege were socialized to be sensitive to the needs of individuals abroad and African Americans in their local communities, but not necessarily to personally identify with them.

Rosalie Oakes and other mentors at the YWCA offered an alternative model of Southern womanhood that went beyond paternalistic notions of charity. For Oakes, the "servants" deserved equal social standing and respect. Joyce Mims, a University of Texas student in the 1950s, remembered Oakes as "a genteel Southern lady, but one who was very impatient with injustice. If something was the right thing to do, then she was going to do it."[23] In the parts of the South in which racial discrimination had gone unquestioned for decades, Oakes returned each year and organized integrated regional conferences, where students from white and black segregated colleges could interact and

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of the campus YWCA. Oakes recalled later that this kind of de facto membership rendered it virtually "meaningless" because it had nothing to do with student commitment. See Rosalie Oakes, Interview by Frances Anton, May 6, 1982, New York, *YWCA of the U.S.A. Records*, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts.

22 http://www.lagrange.edu/resources/yearbooks/1948.pdf Accessed May 10, 2009.

23 Christine Miller Ford, "Quiet Chamption for Civil Rights: Memorial Planned for Activist Rosalie Oakes," *The Winschester Star* (Winchester, VA, September 24, 2008).

experience fellowship with one another on an equal basis.[24] She persistently worked to provide alternatives to the older, charity-based models of racial interaction. Not all Y members were ready for such change, so Oakes focused on those who shared her conviction that Southern students should meet each other beyond the ever-present barrier of race.[25] Still, in the 1940s, the charity model remained the safest form of interaction across the color line.

Similarly to LaGrange, the Campus YW/YMCA at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC) collected money for a local black school in 1948, albeit under the more progressive aegis of its Race Relations Committee, known alternately as the Human Relations Committee.[26] The university was segregated, and thus white college students attempted to form relationships with younger black students in their

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24 The YWCA effort to create interracial fellowship opportunities was well-underway by the late 1940s. Students who participated in these meetings often expressed the positive effect it had on their attitudes towards students of the opposite race. Many white students reflected that these were their first occasions to interact with college educated African Americans. See Dothory Sabiston, Margaret Hiller, and Young Women's Christian Association of the U.S.A. National Board. Dept. of Data and Trends, *Toward Better Race Relations* (New York: Woman's Press, 1949).

25 Oakes recalled that the adult YMCA leadership was not always as receptive to racial change as the YWCA. In Atlanta, adult YMCA leaders would profess to be in favor of racial integration, but then work behind her back to make sure that it did not actually happen. She focused her efforts on students, whose attitudes were more open than their elders. Rosalie Oakes interview with the author, Arlington, Virginia, June 2007, taped, in author's possession.

26 Notably, the fliers distributed for this effort were signed, "The ~~Race~~ [strikethrough in original] Human Relations Committee." From Race Relations: Race Relations Project, 1948-1949, Box 5 Series 2, in the Records of the Campus Y, #40126, *University Archives*, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

community by raising funds and giving Christmas gifts. But charitable giving was not the only context in which students thought about race.

Even as white students maintained older and widely accepted traditions of interaction with African Americans, they also began to take a stand for greater racial equality. In 1948 the UNC Campus Y hosted civil rights activist Bayard Rustin to speak on his work with the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR). The FOR was the progenitor of the later and better known Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), which was comprised of many of the same founding members, including James Farmer. Like Rustin, Farmer and the other FOR members shared a background in the interracial Christian-pacifist movement of the 1930s.[27] In its more mature incarnation after 1942, CORE aimed to create a mass movement dedicated to promoting racial equality, and its philosophy stressed non-violent direct action and interracialism as means for social change. CORE's leaders did not see race relations as a "'Negro problem," but rather a human problem that could be eliminated only through the "joint efforts of all believers in the brotherhood of man."[28] As part of CORE's 1947 Journey of Reconciliation, Rustin and an interracial group of sixteen men traveled by bus through the cities of the upper South to challenge segregation laws. In Chapel Hill, they faced the most violent reaction of the trip. A supportive local white Presbyterian minister in the UNC campus area, Charlie Jones, took Rustin and three of his companions to his home after their arrest at the bus station in Chapel Hill. An angry group of white cab drivers followed Jones and his passengers to

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27 August Meier and Elliott M. Rudwick, *CORE: A Study in the Civil Rights Movement, 1942-1968* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 5.

28 Bernice Fisher: "One of our motivations had been the determination that there should be a thoroughly interracial organization…not another Negro group with a token membership of whites." Ibid., 10.

Jones home, and threatened to burn it down if Rustin and his companions did not leave town immediately.[29]

Fearing what might happen if his charges tried to leave alone, Reverend Jones called a group of students from the Y, who provided a caravan of student cars to escort the CORE riders safely out of town. Violence was averted that day, but the incendiary episode caused some soul-searching among students in Chapel Hill, who liked to think of their campus as more enlightened than others in the region. As a result of his non-violent resistance, Rustin was subsequently convicted of violating segregation statutes, and forced to work on a North Carolina chain gang. Between his initial arrest and conviction, Rustin spent several months in Great Britain and India, speaking and learning about non-violent direct action. While there, he gained many international admirers, and his stories about racial injustice in the United States kept listeners spellbound. However, when he returned to Chapel Hill in 1948 to speak to students at the Campus Y, Rustin's mind was not on international politics, but on the legal injustices and structural oppression that divided the races closer to home. He spoke eloquently of his belief in nonviolence and interracial action to combat racial discrimination, and he encouraged white students to identify with oppressed blacks and to become active in the black community. [30]

Guest speakers like Rustin visited campus communities and discussed race relations throughout the South in the late 1940s, and occasional off-campus meetings

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29 Bayard Rustin and C. Vann Woodward, *Down the Line: The Collected Writings of Bayard Rustin* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1971).

30 See Meier and Rudwick, *CORE: A Study in the Civil Rights Movement, 1942-1968*, 10; John D'Emilio, *Lost Prophet: The Life and Times of Bayard Rustin* (New York: Free Press, 2003); Jervis Anderson, *Bayard Rustin: Troubles I've Seen: A Biography* (New York: HarperCollinsPublishers, 1997).

enabled interracial student contact. But most campus discussions about race remained largely hypothetical until the mid-1950s. Thus, while students participated in activities that dealt with the subject of race relations, class-inscribed methods of interaction such as charity, often inspired by positive contact with black employees on or around campus, remained the norm.

Yet Southern students also engaged more directly with international students who traveled to the U.S. to study in the postwar years. Charity drives for students in other countries remained quite popular throughout the late 1940s and 1950s, and the most successful charity effort on many Southern campuses was the annual drive to raise money for the World University Service. But actual contact with exchange students made a difference in the ways American students thought of their international counterparts. International students had studied at American universities prior to World War II, but these exchanges were halted during the war years. Greater numbers of international students traveled to the United States in the postwar era than ever previously, with the help of new government and student programs designed to increase cultural exchange. The University of North Carolina in particular attracted students from abroad because it was considered (by the State department and others) to provide "more opportunity than other communities for dialogue with American students" due to its relatively liberal campus social climate.[31] The University of Texas attracted not just European students,

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31 1965 addendum by Anne Queen to the 1960-1961 "Report of the Program and Policy Committee of the Joint Advisory Board." Located in "Campus Y – unprocessed" Collection, Folder , "100 Years Y History," *University Archives*, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

but also significant numbers of youths from India and Middle Eastern countries, who sought courses in petroleum and chemical engineering, among others.

Southern students were equally interested in their foreign counterparts, and at the University of North Carolina, many eagerly participated in an annual Goettingen Exchange program in Germany, a Russian student visit program, numerous seminars abroad, as well as summer trips to foreign work camps and conferences. On the UNC campus, the Student Y organized a World Understanding Committee whose express purpose was to promote international understanding through on-campus activities, including an International Relations Council, a Cosmopolitan Club, Supper Forums, UN Seminars, a Model UN Assembly, and a UN Day Committee. These activities were educational in nature, but also functioned as lively social gatherings. For example, the Cosmopolitan Club routinely hosted dinners and dances routinely, where international students taught American students about the dances, food, and other cultural traditions from their homelands. This preponderance of international-related programming was not unique to large state schools; private schools such as Emory University and Agnes Scott College organized and hosted similar activities.

Southern youths took time to create positive experiences for foreign students away from campus. International students enjoyed weekend excursions and field trips where they learned about America's social, cultural, and economic traditions. At the University of North Carolina, Y members took international students on trips to visit the Tennessee Valley Authority Dam project, and the Smoky Mountains over the Easter holiday weekend in the 1950s. Frequently, the University Y solicited nearby families in the community to host international students, particularly for Thanksgiving, in order to give the students more authentic "American" experiences.

Along with a history of charitable giving to students abroad, white Southern students also expended considerable effort to avoid social dualism between American and international students on campus, actively seeking interaction with foreign students wherever possible. In the late 1940s, students at the University of Texas created the International Committee, a student government initiative comprised of both American and international students from different parts of the world. Their purpose was to facilitate "the successful 'integration' of foreign students into University life…and the promotion of better understanding and acceptance of responsibilities by students, both foreign and U.S. citizens." The International Committee took this charge seriously; among other things, it published a newspaper specifically for international students, and orchestrated international dinners and balls.[32] These endeavors reflected not just a desire to make the campus welcoming, but the conscious effort to "successfully integrate" international students into university life, to facilitate understanding and friendships - to avoid social dualism. But even students who believed in greater race equality were less ready to break with the traditional assumptions of racial separation when it came to Southern blacks.

INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE AND LOCAL AWAKENINGS

World War II was a great catalyst in cultural exchange, as the United States sent hundreds of thousands of its young people abroad, most for the first time in their lives. Their collective experiences sparked a common desire to travel and learn about the world firsthand after the end of the war, and many concluded that America's isolationist stance

32 *UT Student Association Records*, 1947-1948, 115, and 1949 *Cactus* Yearbook, 24.

following the First World War had been a tragic mistake. The efforts of the student Y and the National Student Association to cultivate interest in international issues continued even as the Cold War heated up in the late 1940s and 1950s. Many college students retained their optimism about the prospects for postwar peace, and remained eager to learn and to make important contributions to their country, and to the world. College campuses had, since the Allied victory, become places where students shared not only an affiliation with their fellow classmates, but where they envisaged bonds with other students beyond the province of their particular schools, towns, and nation. International cultural exchange was central to this development, and government initiatives by the State Department, the Fulbright Program, and scholarships established by private foundations also proved crucial to this effort. The aim of these programs was to win the "hearts and minds" of international students, particularly international student leaders, in the emerging cultural context of the Cold War.

Various national organizations developed projects that promoted this goal. The National Student Association participated in numerous initiatives abroad, and also created a student travel company that specialized in affordable "study abroad" and "foreign tour" programs. They developed similar programs for international students within the United States, and the student governments of NSA member universities routinely hosted students visiting the country from elsewhere. NSA recognized the need for American students to be more informed about international politics in order for its international initiatives to succeed, and in 1953 NSA began an International Student Relations Seminar, known as the International Student Leadership Training Project.[33]

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33 Unlike other NSA initiatives, this project was increasingly staffed and guided by NSA alumni and adult advisors. Funding for this project came from the Foundation for Youth and Student Affairs, one of the secret conduits for money from the Central

This annual project brought a dozen hand-picked American students together for five weeks of shared study on foreign relations and the world student scene. In 1956 NSA began a Foreign Student Leadership Project, in which select international students traveled to an American college campus for a year of study.[34]

In order to break down misunderstandings on an individual level, universities themselves worked to sustain a history of interaction between foreign exchange and American students. This was not a straightforward, linear process, as the experience of international students at the University of Texas illustrates. International students had enrolled in relatively small numbers at the University of Texas since the 1910s, with the majority coming from Mexico and other Latin American countries. The number of international students from nations beyond the Western hemisphere was so small that all international students were referred to as the "Latin American students," with their own social organization, the Latin American Club, until the mid-1940s. Larger numbers of students from Asia, the Middle East, and Europe arrived beginning in the 1940s. In 1943, 143 international students attended UT, but by 1948 this figure had doubled to 279.

Intelligence Agency. The Church Commission in 1976 would identify this project in particular as a "a vehicle for the Agency to identify new leaders and promote their candidacy for elective positions in the National Student Association." United States. Congress Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations With Respect to Intelligence Activities. and Frank Church, *Foreign and Military Intelligence: Book 1: Final Report, 94th Congress, 2nd Session, 1976*, 185.

34 Summary of International Commission activities, December 8, 1957 – January 7, 1958, box 6, *NSA Papers*.

Mexico permanently lost its place as the top contributor of international students to UT in 1950, when enrollment of students from the Middle East burgeoned.[35]

The University Ys, in Austin and elsewhere during this time, offered the first services for international students, and in the 1930s and 1940s became known as the unofficial "home" for them at UT. The Y assisted international students in finding housing and jobs, as well as providing recreation opportunities and ecumenical religious fellowship.[36] Prior to World War II, the University of Texas provided only modest official support for international students due to a lack of administrative commitment and resources. This changed in 1941 when UT's President, Homer Rainey, hired Joe Neal, a young UT alum and graduate student in Latin American Studies as the first director of the UT International Office. As an undergraduate, Neal co-founded the Inter-American Association, and served as an officer of International Relations Club. He taught international students in the Speech department before beginning his graduate work, where he had learned of the substantial need for official university support for international students. After a four-year stint in the Army during World War II, he worked avidly from 1946 to 1948 to expand the international program, and to establish a strong reputation worldwide for academic study at the University of Texas.[37]

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35 Of the 279 international students at UT in 1948, Mexico was still the country with the greatest number of students enrolled, 51. China's 34 students was the second highest, followed by 23 from Iraq, and 19 from Turkey. Richard Pennington, *Coming to Texas: International Students at the University of Texas* (Austin: Ex-Students' Association of the University of Texas, 1994), 15.

36 See chapter 2 for more detailed account of Y activities with international students prior to the Second World War.

37 "Dr. Joe Neal: The Man Who Introduced Education with a Texas Brand to Over 10,000 Students," *Alcalde*, June 1970.

The UT administration did not always adhere to Neal's unyielding belief in the importance of international education, but he developed a towering reputation for his fierce advocacy on behalf of the International Office. Neal helped thousands of students study in the United States through arrangements with government agencies and foreign governments.[38] He took a personal interest in international students, giving much-needed counsel and assistance on administrative, financial, cultural, and social challenges that they faced at UT. He hosted students at his ranch west of Austin, and took them on trips to places far from campus, including Big Bend and New Orleans.[39]

But the UT International Office had an extremely small staff, which shouldered increasing administrative responsibilities as more international students arrived in the postwar era. Thus, despite Neal's best efforts, international students often felt isolated on campus, enduring confusing and frightening cultural experiences, and some left UT with a negative impression of the United States. A general housing shortage existed for all of UT's students, as the enrollment skyrocketed from 7,027 in 1945 to 17,260 in 1946 after the war.[40] Many international students lived in cramped quarters with other international students, or formed defensive cliques that precluded substantial interaction with American students.

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38 Richard Pennington writes that "Joe W. Neal was to have such a huge impact on the development of international education – at UT, throughout Texas, the United States and the world – that he became and remains a legendary figure, one who has been compared, for better or worse, to President Lyndon B. Johnson." Pennington, *Coming to Texas*, 7.

39 "Dr. Joe Neal: The Man Who Introduced Education with a Texas Brand to Over 10,000 Students."

40 Pennington, *Coming to Texas*, 16.

Further, the racial mores of the South were difficult for many students to navigate and understand. Sheikh Abdullah Tariki was the first student from Saudi Arabia to enroll at the University of Texas at Austin. He earned his master's from 1945 to 1947, and would return to his country to co-found OPEC and serve as Saudi Arabian oil minister, influencing global politics for decades. He chose UT because "I had heard many stories about the Texans. They were masters of oil…I thought, 'If I go there, it's the largest state, and it has the most oil. Then my word will carry weight.'" He arrived at UT with high confidence and a determination to succeed. He recalled that initially, "I wasn't really happy that the university didn't welcome me properly as the first student from Saudi Arabia and so on. I was just another student. But soon I stopped blaming them. I just went ahead and shook hands and said, 'I am from Saudi Arabia.'"[41] Several students from Latin American and Middle Eastern countries were taken aback at the impersonal treatment they perceived when they arrived on campus. Tariki claimed mostly positive experiences, forming warm relationships with fellow UT students and faculty. He was, however, often mistaken for a person of Mexican descent and not allowed to dine at a few off-campus restaurants. [42]

The racial ideologies of not just the United States, but Texas in particular, proved difficult for many international students to navigate. Leonor Castro de Shofield, an international student from Peru, studied for her undergraduate degree at UT from 1942 to 1946. She taught Spanish, and completed her master's thesis on foreign students' experiences at the University of Texas from 1940 to 1950. Her thesis evaluated the efforts of the university regarding international students, and the many ways in which

41 Ibid., 77.

42 Ibid.

these efforts fell short. In it, she described the complex antagonisms that developed among South Americans, Mexican Texans (Tejanos), and Mexicans, the latter of whom were split between Mexico City and Monterrey groups. Dating outside of traditional ethnic groups caused resentment and anger, especially during World War II, when fewer Anglo male students were on campus.[43] These inter-ethnic differences were often lost on Anglo students, however, which fueled national and racial tension. Dr. Ralph Long, a professor who taught English courses for "Latin-Americans" at the university in the early 1940s was deeply concerned by the "feeling of unrest" and "a tremendous amount of anti-Texas and anti-United States talking going on" among Latin American students. These sentiments derived, he said, from a combination of things, including feelings of social neglect and the tendency to resist adopting American cultural standards, such as showing up on time. He identified the biggest source of discontent, however, as stemming from:

> An extreme consciousness of the position of the Texas Mexican. The present Mexican consul is largely responsible for this, I believe. Texans of Mexican extraction, mainly members of the student body, contribute to developing the feeling. Latinophiles like me occasionally contribute unwittingly. Latin-American students who have no sympathy whatever for their own peasantry (which is one of the most debased on earth) are going on emotional crusades here over what they regard as the unreasonable treatment of the Texas peasantry of Mexican extraction. Moreover, they are coming to feel that whenever they are neglected or injured, it is because people are linking them with the Texas Mexicans.[44]

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43 Schofield, "Study of the Efforts of the University of Texas on Behalf of Its Foreign Students."

44 Ibid., 95.

Schofield, who was a Peruvian international student and better understood the dynamics at work, wrote that "[S]ome Latinophiles cannot realize the damage that their patronizing attitude does toward Pan American and world relations." She cautioned that everyone had a "strong dose" of ethnocentrism and self respect, and that the Inter-American Association, as the only truly friendly and understanding campus organization, was frequently the site of "bottled up emotions" over the "forced identification with the Texas-Mexican, of whom the newcomer hears only the bad points."[45]

As more students from the Middle East and elsewhere arrived on campus, UT students gradually became more astute in their distinctions between international students and their knowledge of international politics. Some white students remember first learning of the disputed issues between Arabs and Israelis due to heated debates that took place among international students, both in-person and in *The Daily Texan*.[46] A strong UT Arab Students' Association formed in the late 1940s, mostly composed of male students. Also in the late 1940s, and again in the late 1950s, UT enrolled many students from China, and the Republic of China (Taiwan). No official distinction was made between the two nations though it was nevertheless true that by the late 1950s, all Chinese students came to UT from Taiwan.[47]

American students at this time worked diligently to establish formal study and travel abroad programs for themselves. One of the biggest inducements to affiliation

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45 Ibid., 96-97.

46 Martha Carroll interview with the author, Austin, Texas, April 2006, taped, in author's possession, and Speed Carroll interview with the author, Austin, TX, April 2006, taped, in author's possession.

47 Pennington, *Coming to Texas*, 18.

with the National Student Association was the access it afforded southern students to participate in foreign travel programs.[48] Many southern students traveled abroad in search of authentic experiences with their international counterparts, and these exchanges often had profoundly personal consequences. A popular destination for several University of Texas at Austin students in the mid-1950s was the Agape Ecumenical Work Camp in the Waldensian Valley, outside of Turin, Italy. UT students Celia Buchan (Morris), Carol Hamilton, Martha King Carroll, and Speed Carroll all traveled in sequential years to Agape for what was known as an "experiment in international living." Youth from various parts of the world gathered to work, live, and share in broadly defined spiritual fellowship during the summer. A protestant pastor named Tullio Vinay ran the camp, and he captivated students with tales of his experiences in the Resistance against Mussolini and Hitler. Agape had a big impact on the UT students who attended, usually in pairs or by themselves, who then returned to Austin and shared their experiences with students who would attend the following year.

These international experiences changed the ways in which students thought about themselves and the South, often in unanticipated ways. Celia Buchan (who later became Celia Morris when she married fellow UT student and writer Willie Morris) traveled to Agape in 1954, the summer after her freshman year at the University of Texas. Buchan grew up in the all-white River Oaks community in Houston, where

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48 The CIA covertly funded the NSA dating back to 1947, especially the NSA's international programs. Most students were unaware of this, however. For more on CIA initiatives to secretly fund youth efforts as part of their cultural Cold War efforts, see Paget, "From Stockholm to Leiden: The CIA's Role in the Formation of the International Student Conference"; Joël Kotek, *Students and the Cold War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996).

"conventional wisdom had it that the NAACP was a Communist front" and her senior class went without a civics textbook "since the school board banned the one proposed because it included a reference to 'one world.'"[49] She traveled abroad just a month after the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision -- a time which, she recalled, "marked the virtual end of one path and the start of another."[50] From then on, racial integration "became *the* defining issue" for her and many students whom she knew. She later wrote that after the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954, "[l]oud voices all over the state had begun reminding everybody what had become of [Heman] Sweatt [the first African American admitted to the UT Law school], academically speaking…his failure was thought to presage the failure of any Negroes who 'got out of their place' and presumed to infiltrate 'our' institutions." She remembered that friends split on the issue. Some acted firmly, but many more "took smaller steps – very slowly" to support racial equality.[51]

Buchan enjoyed living in an international environment, but when she returned from working and worshipping with people of different faiths, nationalities, and backgrounds at Agape, she "faced the fact that I was not a Christian; it really was that simple."[52] Her faith was not in religion, she realized, but in the possibility of man to change conditions on earth. Thus, she resigned her elected officer position with the Student Y at UT. Buchan knew the Y leadership didn't care if she was a believer or not,

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49 Celia Morris, "Learning the Hard Way," in *Women on Campus: The Unfinished Liberation* (New Rochelle, NY: Change magazine, 1975), 137.

50 Morris, *Finding Celia's Place*, 63, 65–66.

51 Ibid., 66.

52 Ibid., 73.

but it mattered to her because she wanted to act in accordance with her true beliefs, and organized religion was no longer among them.[53] She still hoped to work for racial equality, but not from within the Christian community. Yet the Y remained the central place on campus for students who supported desegregation.

At the University of Texas and the University of North Carolina, Y members organized holiday getaways for exchange students to small towns and country ranches to give them cultural experiences beyond campus. Such activities were meant to educate both the international students about Americans, and the local community about other cultures. A typical excursion involved a group of international students who were hosted in a small town by a Rotary Club or a local church. After social events and a meal, the students would speak about their homelands and customs, and perhaps demonstrate traditional dances or songs. The international students stayed in the homes of local families and participated in American recreational activities. A weekend excursion of this type took place in 1955, when thirty-seven international students at UNC traveled to Zebulon, a small North Carolina town where international students toured a town hall, farm, police and volunteer fire departments, a tobacco warehouse, a cotton gin, and a printing office. The townspeople planned a chicken barbecue and a square dance for the students' entertainment, and the international students entertained the locals with stories and songs. On Sunday, the students led both Sunday school classes and the morning worship services at nearby churches.[54]

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53 Celia Morris interview with the author, March 2007, Austin, TX, taped, in author's possession.

54 This kind of excursion was repeated in many cities throughout the South. "World's Going to Zebulon," *Daily Tar Heel* (Chapel Hill, NC, November 3, 1955).

The joint planning, collaborative effort in mutual education, and intense degree of interaction between locals and international students suggested respect for and a genuine desire to learn from and entertain students from abroad. International students were a part of an imagined community of students of the world, and locals displayed a real curiosity to meet, learn from them, and invite them into their communities. The social nature of the planned interactions is explicit, as the activities included dancing, eating, sleeping in the same home, and shared religious worship between native (white) North Carolinians and international students. Locals usually treated students from other countries as welcome guests. On campus, foreign students of all nationalities were included in social activities. During off-campus gatherings, this seems to have held generally true. At least one prominent member of the Chapel Hill alumni community, however, made a specific request that the Y hand-pick international students of fairer complexion to send to his community for a visit. He remarked that Egyptians were "okay," but requested that no Africans visit the next time.[55] The UNC Dean of Students and the Student Y leadership privately balked at this request, but nevertheless complied, recognizing that white Southern hospitality had its limits.

The U.S. commitment to winning the Cold War helped to secure funding from private and government agencies for student exchange in the 1950s. The Fulbright Act, beginning in 1951, brought hundreds of students and scholars to campus. And the indignities that international students suffered unnerved white students as well, who argued for more university funding and counseling services, and took the initiative in many arenas to create a more open and inviting atmosphere both on-campus and off. A

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55 See letters in "Foreign Students: In Residence, 1956-57" In Cabinet, YMCA 1947-1949, in Subseries 6-Cabinet, Box 2, Records of the UNC Campus Y.

Daily Texan editorial in the Spring of 1955, entitled "The Foreign Student's Problem" argued that "[i]t would be better to have no foreign student program at all than to have one that sends foreign students back to their country embittered." This, it lamented, was exactly what the University of Texas was doing.[56] Whereas the number of international students had risen in 1955 to 562, from over five dozen countries, the staff available to serve them was the same as it had been when there were just 300 international students, a decade earlier. Further, international students arrived at UT with the real need for personal interaction, yet no full-time counselor was employed to listen to their concerns. The author implied that the impact would reverberate far beyond UT:

> If we cannot afford [full time counseling], we certainly cannot afford to send students back to their countries with a complete misunderstanding of this country. The foreign student program can be the best world-peace weapon we have. It can also be the most dangerous weapon of self-destruction. Unless the needs of these students are met more adequately than they can be now, the program will be a bomb that blows up in our own unseeing eyes.[57]

He added that American students did not "yet realize how important a part they should play" in the winning of hearts and minds.[58]

In 1956, UT student Hank Kirschner proposed a multi-pronged student initiative to involve greater numbers of UT students directly in international programming.[59] Kirschner was active on a student government committee on international affairs, and represented UT at the seven-week National Student Association (NSA) International

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56 "The Foreign Student's Problem," *Daily Texan* (Austin, TX, April 7, 1955).

57 Ibid.

58 Ibid.

59 Robb Burlage, "International Student Program May Get Needed 'Shot in Arm'," *Daily Texan* (Austin, TX, October 4, 1956).

Student Relations Seminar at Harvard University on Foreign Student Affairs.[60] He served in several NSA leadership posts and proposed a new University of Texas International Commission, which would have seven sub-committees which would address various facets of international student needs and international awareness. These included hospitality, programming, personal contacts, and coordination of programs with other campus organizations, including the Student Y. Kirschner remarked that "From now on, the entire program will no longer be 'foreign student' but truly international…and each student at the University will feel a part."[61] The International Commission gained support, and students in the following years worked to develop real partnerships with international students on campus.

While UT students attempted to create real community with international students through increasing formalized contact and programming, local battles to integrate public schools took place throughout the South. On the same day that the *Daily Texan* reported on the new proposed International Commission at UT, an adjacent editorial took a stand against white segregationists who were picketing Lamar State College of Technology in Beaumont, Texas. The editorial, entitled, "Right for Now," spoke out in support of the 500 Lamar students, over a tenth of the student body, who had signed a petition in opposition to the white adults who protested as the first African Americans enrolled at their campus. The article stressed the difference in attitude between the white adult

60 This international seminar brought student leaders from the around the world to study problems together, and to enjoy recreation, theater, music, food, and other aspects of American culture with American students. The CIA secretly funded this seminar.

61 Burlage, "International Student Program May Get Needed 'Shot in Arm'."

segregationists and the white college students at Lamar, who had no quarrel with the black students who joined them in classrooms. It noted that:

> Future students will no doubt, consider the Lamar student action mild. Another generation will embrace stands considered radical now.
>
> But on October 4, 1956, the petition seems right. It is a voice of a new generation, asking not to change the old way, but to be allowed to change itself. The *Texan* cannot help but commend the stand.[62]

Youth, the author argued, had historically taken the initiative to bring change to the nation. The student stand at Lamar was notable not for its radical nature, but for the appeal to "law and order, the fair proceedings of justice as interpreted by the Supreme Court." Whereas the students did not demand integration, they asked that interference and "anti-integration picketing by adult non-students cease."[63]

THE PROBLEM OF SOCIAL DUALISM

Curiosity about foreign students and other countries did not necessarily imply an equally open mind about race relations or African American students. The tone of the *Daily Texan* editorial in October 1956 was decidedly cautious, and advocated only acceptance of new law, not action to correct social inequality. The presence of dark-skinned international students, however, complicated the traditional racially segregated patterns of interaction. International students with darker skin were at a decided disadvantage, and many had to "prove" their foreignness to be able to participate fully in Southern campus communities.

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62 "Right for Now," *Daily Texan* (Austin, TX, October 4, 1956).

63 Ibid.

Will Campbell, a young minister from Mississippi, worked as the chaplain at the University of Mississippi in the early 1950s. He recalled a friend who was a young light-complected African American Baptist minister, visiting him on campus and declaring his intention to apply to Ole Miss. Campbell thought the more cautious approach would be for his friend to apply for and take a correspondence course first, and then announce afterwards that an African American student had already taken courses at Ole Miss. During their visit, the two struck up a game of ping pong outside of Campbell's office, when two white male students who were involved in junior citizen's council stopped to watch them play. Afterwards, the two white students, one a large football player with a hot temper, the other a law school student, insisted that Campbell tell them if his friend was black or not. Campbell said that he was, but "if you can't tell the difference what difference does it make?" The students were angry and wanted to physically fight Campbell, who walked faster and asked the students again, "What difference does it make if you've got to ask that question?" He recalled that "it was an honest question. They weren't sure but what he was a Central American or South American student, somewhere like that." There were also Indian students enrolled at the university, and at least one whose skin was much darker than the Baptist minister's. But he was harder to mistake as African American because, "[o]f course, he wore a turban."[64]

By the mid-1950s, most white Southern students viewed darker-skinned international students as international first and foremost; and their "foreignness" exempted them from local racial standards. They were granted the privileges and status

64 Will Campbell interview with Dr. Orley B. Caudill, near Mount Juliet, TN, June 8, 1976. *Mississippi Oral History Collection*, The University of Southern Mississippi. Accessed at http://anna.lib.usm.edu/~spcol/crda/oh/campbell.htm

accorded white students. But off campus, in Southern communities, this nuanced view did not always prevail. The experiences of international and African American students as they attempted to dine or to go to movies revealed the impossibility of equal educational opportunities in a social dualistic system, as well as the individual costs that it asked of African American students.

In 1955, the UNC campus Y hosted a meeting between twenty-one white and black UNC students to discuss "the status of the Negro on campus."[65] Five students were African American, and two reporters and the adult YMCA advisor also attended. Black students began the discussion, and they recounted experiences of discrimination off-campus, where most restaurants and all the theaters in Chapel Hill refused service to blacks. One student said "If you leave the campus the tension mounts." Several black students relayed experiences of treatment as African American students when on campus, but off-campus, they were viewed simply as African Americans. He suggested a "step by step" process to improve race relations.[66]

A black law student observed that on campus, "the white student will accept the Negro student only to a certain point" before drawing a firm line. One of the areas clearly off-limits was any "discussion between a Negro and a white about white girls."[67] This comment reflects black students' discontent with white insistence on preventing any form of "social equality." As a consequence, African Americans in this period

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65 Bill Corpening, "Y Launches Project for Race Relations," *Daily Tar Heel* (Chapel Hill, NC, November 11, 1955).

66 "Race Discussion Series Opened By Y at UNC," *Durham Morning Herald* (Durham, NC, November 11, 1955).

67 Ibid.

experienced widespread isolation and exclusion due to the practice of social dualism on campuses. Black students who attended white northern universities endured similar social ostracism. Though northern cities did not enforce segregation by law, campus social groups and Greek society groups often abided by segregationist policies. African American students created their own Greek organizations, but due to a discrimination clause in the National Panhellenic Council, their chapters were not admitted into local campus interfraternity Councils.[68] In both the North and the South, the NAACP and interracial organizations such as the Y and the National Student Association were important in integrating students into social life on campus. [69]

Another black UNC law student observed that "in his opinion, skin color was not the basis of segregation. He cited the example that dark-skinned foreigners are readily accepted, while Negroes, although of practically the same skin color, are not." To him, this meant that "the only basis of segregation must be an imaginary 'stigma on the Negro.'"[70] Taken together, these comments reflect efforts by black students to discuss the separate social worlds which certainly characterized their off-campus experiences, but also their frustration that white students and administrators actively sought to recreate

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68 At the University of Texas at Austin, as elsewhere, black fraternity and sorority chapters formed their own governing body, since they were barred from participation in the UT Interfraternity Council. Goldstone, *Integrating the 40 Acres*, 88.

69 The Y and the NSA offered rare interracial recreational opportunities, in both the North and South. For a fuller discussion on this issue, see Bynum, "'Our Fight Is for Right:' The NAACP Youth Councils and College Chapters' Crusade for Civil Rights, 1936-1965," 95–96.

70 Corpening, "Y Launches Project for Race Relations."

these markers of discrimination on campus. The differences in the treatment of African American and international students indicated the unconscious prejudices in even the most progressive of southerners. The white students may or may not have realized their complicity and active role in the construction of these separate social worlds, but such dialogue made clear that "the price of peace" asked of black students stood in stark contrast to the efforts to create peace and bonds of affection with international students.

The two newspaper accounts of this frank conversation conducted by the UNC Y emphasized the black students' comments, but included very few quotes from the white students at the meeting. The campus newspaper, The *Daily Tar Heel*, described the meeting as the launch of a "project for race relations," and emphasized that "complete analysis of Negro-white relations" was the goal. The overall tone was hopeful, and the article noted that one black student remarked that he intended to live on campus the next semester. The campus article also emphasized that several students at the meeting volunteered to serve on a planning committee with other Chapel Hill organizations "interested in a better understanding of Negro-White relations."

The *Durham Herald* reporter, on the other hand, described the subject of the meeting as "problems Negro students have encountered at the University," and emphasized that future meetings would address "various aspects of the racial problem including intermarriage and occupational integration." The word choice of the city article denotes greater conflict, both present and future. In general, this article, author unspecified, utilized more direct quotes, most of which addressed specific incidents and problems encountered on campus and in the surrounding community, as well as warnings given to black students of where not to go on and off-campus. The conversation also addressed the "acceptability" of blacks in campus housing, where a section of one dorm was reserved for their separate accommodations. Notably, this article gave a fuller

account of a black student who stated his intent to live on campus; he had wanted to live on campus previously, "but was 'persuaded' by officials to commute from Durham."[71] This article accentuated the tensions surrounding black students on campus, especially in social situations, and the pressures on them to accept the social dualism that restricted their opportunities to take part in campus as equal students.

The Durham Herald account of the meeting also included a student remark that that the annual law school dance was cancelled because a small group of "'die-hard Southerners'" tried to convince the black students not to attend, and then warned the off-campus establishments that there would be trouble if they held the dance there. Black students shared a few "'amusing incidents' and one asked the [white] girls present why, when approached by a Negro student, they hung their head down, "glanced to see if any white boy is watching, and [only then, would] say 'Hi'?'" The female students laughed, probably nervously, but offered no response to this question.[72]

Both the *Daily Tar Heel* and the *Durham Morning Herald* published photos of this meeting. Each show black and white male students in coat and ties, and white female students in blouses and long skirts, sitting closely to one another and listening intently.[73] The two articles contain similar information and some of the same student comments from the meeting. But the campus paper focused on positive comments and hope for future progress, whereas the *Durham Herald* utilized more direct quotes and presented a starkly realistic version, anticipatory of future problems. Durham, "the capital of the black middle class," had a much larger African American community than the small

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71 "Race Discussion Series Opened By Y at UNC."

72 Ibid.

73 See Figure 3 in Appendix for *Durham Morning Herald* photo.

campus town of Chapel Hill, and a stronger tradition of black organizational efforts. [74] Notably, almost all of the issues not covered by the *Daily Tar Heel* were issues of "social equality" and the black student critique of social duality on campus.

The difference in subject and tone was so marked that a letter to the editor was written to the *Durham Herald*, and reprinted also in the *Daily Tar Heel* at the request of the author, D. L. Stephens, presumably a white student who was present at the meeting. Stephens complained that the *Durham Herald* article included all of the "little negatives" from the meeting and neglected to acknowledge "some of the wholesome relationships that have been enjoyed by members of both races." Stephens cited several positive student quotes from the meeting in an attempt to clear up the impression created by the *Herald* article. On the whole, he argued, the tone of the meeting was upbeat and the sentiments expressed by black students suggested that they encountered very few problems on campus. He complained that the *Herald* article focused unduly on the negatives and had neglected to mention the overall positive nature of the conversation. Positive attitudes were important, he argued, to create race relations that "ought long to have been."[75] Tone attitude issues aside, black students on desegregating campuses throughout the South faced concrete social barriers and the presence of "outsiders" such as international students helped to bring this into clearer focus.

Black students often became reluctant teachers, as interracial public interactions frequently initiated a learning process for whites about what life was like for their black

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74 Christina Greene, *Our Separate Ways: Women and the Black Freedom Movement in Durham, North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 7.

75 D.L. Stephens, "Reader's Retort: Race Relations Grammar Rules," *Daily Tar Heel* (Chapel Hill, NC, November 18, 1955).

classmates. In 1956, JoAnne Smart [Drane] and Bettye Ann Davis [Tillman] were the first two women to integrate Woman's College of North Carolina in Greensboro in 1956. On one occasion, classmates from New York and Holland convinced her to accompany them to a delicatessen off campus in Greensboro. The restaurant became quiet and a waitress approached their table and explained that she could only serve whites. After a few minutes they left and Smart remembers the three of them going back to their dorm to commiserate about the incident. She ended up consoling them because "they were really very hurt by this. And I think I ended up perhaps helping them to feel better about it. Because it was something that I fully expected, but they had not anticipated."[76] Smart's experience echoes that of numerous postwar black youths who humored their disbelieving white friends who had little personal awareness about the realities of segregation.

Norman Francis, a law student at Loyola University in the 1950s, recounts a similar incident when his white classmates joked that he was too lazy to accompany them for a hamburger on Canal Street in New Orleans. When he complied, and experienced the refusal of service that he predicted, the white students became angry at this treatment. These interracial experiences, facilitated by educational integration and forums like NFCCS and NSA, were vitally important. Francis argues that black students "educate[ed] a cadre of young white college students as to what race relations was really all about…We were showing our white friends that while the segregation laws of the state were written to keep us out of certain places, the knife cut both ways. Those laws

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76 Elizabeth JoAnne Smart Drane interview with Hermann Trojanowski, June 5, 2008, Raleigh, NC, transcript item# 1.81.1339 in the *Institutional Memory Oral History Project*, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

were also telling them whom they could choose as friends."[77] Francis cites these formative experiences as essential in creating lifelong interracial friendships and networks of young people who were committed to ending racial segregation.

The anachronisms between the treatment of international students and black students on integrated campuses continued throughout the late 1950s. In 1961, UT students had created a full orientation program to welcome new international students onto campus, which included a one-on-one effort to show international students around campus and to local restaurants and coffee shops. The rationale for this new effort was that "[p]eople, they figure, are one of utmost important parts of college.[78] In the following months, the *Daily Texan* ran a series of articles introducing new foreign students individually, including their backgrounds, accomplishments, and photographs.[79]

The difference in treatment towards American-born students with a darker skin color was so striking that African American students at UT on at least two occasions

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77 Many of these white students would develop strong personal commitments to end segregation. Francis cites the example of his friend Moon Landrieu, who just a few years after this incident would enact a city ordinance that abolished all city laws that discriminated on the basis of race, and would continue to fight against segregation laws in the Louisiana legislature in the 1960s, and carried this progressive platform into the office of Mayor of New Orleans and U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development. Francis writes, "He literally changed race relations in New Orleans single-handedly." Francis, "Leadership in a Southern Black Catholic College," 433.

78 "Welcome, World!," *Daily Texan* (Austin, TX, January 17, 1961).

79 Jo Eickmann, "Texan-Chilean Exchange Blazes 'Frontier'," *Daily Texan* (Austin, TX, February 1, 1961); Jack Lowe, "Introducing 'Los Chilenos'," *Daily Texan* (Austin, TX, February 1, 1961); "The Blockade of 'No Comment'," *Daily Texan* (Austin, TX, February 7, 1961).

attempted to "pass" as foreigners.[80] In one instance, three black students went to a university theater and tried to buy tickets. The lighter-skinned black student explained to the clerk that he was from Hong Kong, and that his two "Egyptian" friends could not speak English. The agent sold them tickets, but once inside the theater, they were told by another employee that "Some of the other theaters have been having trouble with integrationists. And if we let dark-skinned foreigners in, we might make a mistake and let a Negro in also." The next theater they tried also denied them admission. The manager apologized, and explained that segregation was also a part of democracy in America. The students finally secured admission to a third theater, which was satisfied that they were foreigners. (They saw *Psycho*.) On another occasion, a Middle Eastern student, Saad Husaini, teamed up with his friends, two black women students, and bought them tickets with no problem. Chandler Davidson referred to this episode in his *Daily Texan* column, and remarked that fortunately his black friends had a sense of humor about the "stupidities of the more bigoted of their white brothers. The foreign students, on the other hand, find it harder to laugh. They haven't grown up as second-class citizens. I wonder what they will have to say about the American Way of Life when they return home."[81]

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80 Chandler Davidson, "Beware the Jabberwock," *Daily Texan* (Austin, TX, February 8, 1961).

81 Ibid.

CONCLUSION

In 1955, Dr. Guy Johnson sanguinely observed that social dualism, or "the price of peace," had helped to make Southern desegregation a relatively peaceful process. In the initial stages, social dualism may have mollified hostile Southern whites, but the effect was to defer any fundamental questioning of notions of community. This chapter has traced the process by which students began, over time, to challenge social dualism on integrated Southern campuses. Though initially students at segregated white colleges viewed international students and African Americans through the prism of charity and need for assistance, important differences in the perception of these groups became clearer as Cold War tensions mounted and as Southern schools slowly began to desegregate in the 1950s. International students were eventually viewed as international counterparts, equal peers, partners against communism and individuals from whom Americans could learn important cultural lessons. The treatment of and assumptions about black students, on campus and off, was altogether different.

Thus, African Americans shouldered the presumed "price of peace" in the South as they became students at integrated campuses. In the wider community, black citizens paid the price collectively, and made the best of separate churches, secondary schools, and neighborhoods, despite structural roadblocks for their improvement. But on an integrated campus where whites and blacks shared classroom space, methods of separation were obviously improvised, and constructed. The exclusion of African Americans from various facets of campus social life reinforced their minority status, and made certain that they were viewed primarily in racial terms, not simply as "students."

Social dualism in integrated higher education in the South, however, stood at odds with the spirit of desegregation outlined in the 1954 *Brown v. Board* decision. It spoke to the most personal and intractable issue of changing proverbial hearts and minds about

race relations. Guy Johnson and other proponents of racial gradualism presumed that even in the best of circumstances, change would be a lengthy process, and that it would have to take place on many levels. In 1930, Johnson wrote that the "hope of liberalizing the Southern attitude toward the Negro lies largely with the college man."[82] After five more years of studying race relations, he speculated that segregation would persist for "several hundred years to come," despite the best efforts of African Americans to overcome educational and economic disparities.[83] In the late 1940s and 1950s, however, local attitudes towards segregation changed rapidly, as black and white students in the South came to view domestic race relations and American foreign relations as related to one another.

Most Southern liberals did not anticipate the speed with which students themselves would begin to demand a change in social relations. The addition of international issues and international students to Southern campus life threw the rationale of separate social worlds into sharp relief against a broader struggle for peace and global cooperation. The presence of international students heightened the anachronistic quality of the Southern race relations in the context of the quest for hearts and minds of the world. In this context, white students could not justify a policy of granting fewer rights

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82 Johnson, "What Southern Colleges Are Doing About the Race Question," memorandum prepared for the Council on Interracial Cooperation (CIC), included in Johnson to R.B. Eleazor, April 14, 1930, Series 2.1, Folder 92, in the *Guy Benton Johnson Papers #3826*, Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

83 Johnson thought that the cultural lag between white and black institutions rendered segregation intractable for the foreseeable future, and he argued that African Americans would "maintain that self-respect and spiritual integrity which brought the Jew through centuries of persecution and oppression." Guy B. Johnson, "Isolation or Integration?," *Opportunity* 13, no. 3 (1935): 89–90.

to black citizen-students than to their international counterparts. Black students led the way, and they demonstrated that social equality, that longtime Southern bugaboo, was necessary for true desegregation. In the process, white students began to view older models of white/black interaction based on charity as misguided. For students on key Southern college campuses, the postwar Southern landscape was no longer simply a local one. As students learned of the world, they questioned the rationale for racial segregation in their local communities. In this process, the "price of peace" paid at home became more transparent, and increasingly unsustainable.

PART TWO: IMPROVING HUMAN RELATIONS

Chapter 4: The Interracial and International Aspirations of the Student YWCA

In 1946, Rosalie Oakes, white YWCA Southern regional secretary and Jean Fairfax, dean of women at Tuskegee University, convened an interracial student YWCA-YMCA conference near Hendersonville, North Carolina. For the safety of students, the organizers held the event at a private campground, hoping that the integrated meeting would attract little notice from the surrounding community. A public road cut through the property, however, and locals learned of the gathering. Word spread that photographs had been distributed in town of white and black coed students swimming together at the camp. The owner of the property reported receiving phone threats that the camp would be burned down, and that the Ku Klux Klan was planning violent action against the students. The state police refused to intervene. Oakes and Fairfax and their counterparts in the YMCA, adult advisors Henry Ware and Murray Branch, went as single sex, interracial pairs to appeal to the community for assistance. They sought help from businessmen, women's church groups, and the local authorities, all to no avail.[1] "We asked every clergyman in town, white and black, to help us, but none of them would," Oakes said later. The Y members planned a patrol of the grounds for their Friday evening service, which they decided to hold despite the threats. "We sat up all night, singing and praying, waiting for the assault," Fairfax remembered. "It was a terrifying

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1 Rosalie Oakes interview with Frances Anton, May 6, 1982, New York. *Southern Women, the Student YWCA, and Race (1920-1944) Collection*, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

experience."[2] Over a hundred of the Klansmen showed up, armed, hooded, and bearing torches for their "traditional Saturday night activity."[3] Fortunately, they arrived a day late, after the conference was over and the students had returned to their schools. But the message was clear: an unmistakable personal risk accompanied efforts at biracial assembly in the South.

This incident illustrates the efforts of a small but important number of young people involved with the Student YWCA to put democratic and religious ideals of equality into practice in the postwar period. They faced many forms of resistance, including the threats of ostracism, rejection, and physical violence. In addition to external threats, postwar youth faced internal resistance, in the form of the assumptions and prejudices they acquired in a society bound by racial hierarchy. The cumulative effect of this resistance to social change was that the majority of southerners went along with the status quo. But there were "pockets" of students throughout the South who began to question the strict codes of racial and gender etiquette which governed their communities. The National YWCA encouraged such questions, and the Student YWCA functioned as a crucial facilitator for Southern student efforts to achieve a more just society.

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2 Oakes and Fairfax quoted in John Egerton, *Speak Now Against the Day: The Generation Before the Civil Rights Movement in the South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 427.

3 Rosalie Oakes interview with Frances Anton, May 6, 1982, New York. *Southern Women, the Student YWCA, and Race (1920-1944) Collection*, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

The Student Y, which included young adults and adult mentors, aspired to the "Social Creed" of putting faith into action. It was ecumenical in philosophy, and its history included progressive politics among active and working women.[4] The YWCA provided adult mentors, financial and emotional support, physical space, and rare opportunities for young women to lead. Local chapters operated on a majority of college campuses in the South, and thus the organization maintained widespread contact with young people. It provided crucial opportunities for women to develop as individuals, and it also influenced young men on coeducational campuses and through frequent student YWCA-YMCA partnerships. Importantly, the YWCA worked diligently to dispel internal resistance to social change by providing vital experiences in interracial fellowship, friendship, and mutual concern. The structure of the Y granted individual associations the autonomy to choose their own activities, while at the same time, connecting them to their regional, national, and international counterparts. The Y was very consciously a world movement, constantly emphasizing connection with women in YWCAs elsewhere. This shared purpose strengthened the commitment of individual women to racial and gender equality beyond province or boundary.

This chapter considers the contributions of the Young Women's Christian Association to the development of improved race relations in the South in the mid-twentieth century. It posits that the pursuit of racial equality by the student YWCA accelerated the process of social change that unfolded in the postwar years. Religious and moral convictions provided a starting point for many young people, who struggled to make sense of the contradictions that segregation and racial inequality created in their

4 See Chapter One for information on the history of the Student YWCA .

communities. The YWCA widened the frame of reference of social life beyond conventional religious precepts to national and international concerns. To those youth receptive to this message, racial inequality was not simply a "Southern problem" or "the Negro problem," but a problem of human equality. The YWCA struggled to strengthen human relations in the South through direct experience and understanding across racial lines, a crucial step to achieving equality.

INTEGRATING THE YM/YWCA SOUTHERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE

For practical reasons, the student YWCA often operated in tandem with the student YMCA on some larger university campuses, and in area and national conferences. This enabled the combined student YM/YWCA, known as the Student Y, and on some campuses as the Student Christian Association (SCA), to pool their resources and offer stronger programs in a coeducational format. The national YMCA tended to be more conservative than the national YWCA. The student chapters of each were more progressive than their parent organizations, and the student YWCA was more progressive than the student YMCA. In part, this was because the student YMCA derived its funding from the coffers of the local YMCA, and thus, student YMCAs were more beholden to the university and the financial support from the surrounding community. The student YWCA, on the other hand, received its funding from the national YWCA, and thus its operations were not as directly dependent on the goodwill and graces of the local power structure. In practical terms, this meant that the student YWCA tended to have a radicalizing influence on the agenda of the student YMCA whenever they worked together.

In the South, male students could attend one of two student YMCA area conferences each year, the segregated black or the segregated white conference. The white conference operated at the Blue Ridge Assembly in NC, a beautiful facility in the mountains owned by the adult YMCA. The black student Y members met at a camp in King's Mountain, NC each year. The student YWCA did not have its own regional facilities, so they routinely teamed up with the student YMCA for combined annual conferences. In the 1920s, white YWCA women students could attend either conference, but black YWCA women members could only attend the King's Mountain conference. Small groups of white and black women students were meeting together through the YWCA at this time, however, and they wanted the summer conferences to be integrated. The student YWCA's membership was interracial and was historically much more committed to interracial gatherings than the student YMCA. Thus, the Student YWCA pressured the YMCA to open the Blue Ridge conference up to black students so that an integrated student conference for all Y participants could take place in the South.

The student YMCA, however, had much less experience holding small-group interracial meetings. The YMCA adult leadership professed sympathy to the objective, but did not believe that the majority of the students were ready for interracial fellowship. Such assembly was against North Carolina law, the adult YMCA officials argued, and they feared that the repercussions from student and parents who were unprepared for interracial fellowship would damage the cause of interracial understanding altogether. So until 1936, three conferences were held each summer – a white conference, a black conference, and an interracial conference for those YWCA and (primarily black) YMCA groups that were "ready" for it. The white regional YMCA leadership agreed that the interracial conference would be the "main conference" and vowed to send as many

students as possible to the integrated conference each year, while still holding the Blue Ridge conference for whites who were not yet ready to integrate.

The student wing of the YWCA had become increasingly progressive in its stance towards racial equality leading up to the mid-1940s. Quiet ventures in interracial fellowship early in the twentieth century convinced many young white women that segregation was un-Christian and immoral. Moreover, throughout the 1920s and 1930s, two YWCA regional secretaries, one black and one white, traveled to universities in the South for the express purpose of encouraging intercollegiate and interracial fellowship among student Y participants.[5] They faced an uphill task, but they were able to create opportunities for meaningful interaction for Southern white and black women that were almost nonexistent elsewhere in society.

Specific racial incidents helped to stoke the collective conscience of the Student YWCA, including the 1931 death of Juliette Derricotte, the Dean of Women at Fisk University. Derricotte was a much beloved black student YWCA regional secretary during the 1920s, and afterwards, a member of the YWCA National Board. She routinely traveled by car to avoid the humiliation of segregated seating on the train. While en route to Atlanta, Derricote sustained injuries in an automobile accident in rural Georgia. Derricotte and the students who traveled with her, one of which died immediately, were not taken to any of the all-white hospitals in the area. Local white physicians treated her after the accident, but she endured great pain before dying. Word of her death, and the facts surrounding it, spread quickly throughout the YWCA. YWCA colleague and national officer Ethel Gilbert asked the doctor who treated Derricotte, 'to your knowledge

5 An important account of these efforts can be found in Taylor, "On the Edge of Tomorrow."

was any attempt made by anyone to get them into Hamilton Memorial Hospital?" He replied, "Oh no'm. We don't take them there." Gilbert asked, "But knowing the seriousness of this particular case, did no-one attempt to get them in, in spite of the usual procedures?" The doctor explained, "Oh no, ma'm. You see, we don't even have any wards for them there."[6]

The circumstances of Derricote's death outraged her many friends, white and black, throughout the South. This incident created a ripple effect within the Student YWCA that reached far beyond her colleagues, and her story became an oft-told morality tale about the unjustifiable cruelty of segregation. A colleague commented that, for all the good she accomplished, Juliette Derricotte did more for the movement in her death than she could have in life. One historian has argued that her death was a watershed moment in the history of the YWCA, galvanizing what had been a social reform-minded organization into one that placed racial justice as its highest goal.[7] Racial prejudice did become a prominent part of national student YWCA efforts, and during the 1930s they campaigned (unsuccessfully) for anti-lynching legislation. In 1938, students conducted the first interracial seminar in the South at Shaw University, Raleigh, North Carolina.

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6 Letter to Miss Blanchard from Ethel Gilbert, November 13, 1931. YWCA Collection, Box 42b, *YWCA of the U.S.A. records, 1860-2002*, Sophia Smith Collection, Neilson Library, Smith College, Northampton, MA. The importance of this incident to the Student YWCA and the lingering anguish among Derricotte's colleagues is evident in oral interviews recorded fifty years later. See Southern Women, the Student YWCA, and Race (1920-1944) Collection, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

7 Helen Laville, "'If the Time Is Not Ripe, Then It Is Your Job to Ripen the Time!' The Transformation of the YWCA in the USA from Segregated Association to Interracial Organization, 1930-1965," *Women's History Review* 15, no. 3 (2006): 360–361.

During the meeting, they "called for an investigation into segregation in YWCA associations and community life." The national YWCA conducted such a study, and the results indicated a large gap between rhetoric and practice.

By the mid-1930s, neither the black YMCA nor the Student YWCA was satisfied with the operation of segregated conferences, and in 1936 the black student YMCA made the difficult decision to vote their King's Mountain meeting completely out of existence. The annual gathering at King's Mountain held as much nostalgic importance for black students as did Blue Ridge for whites, yet the Black Student YMCA decided that they would no longer support a segregated conference, and would participate only in the interracial conference. The white student YMCA, however, did not invite the black YMCA to their annual conference, but instead they maintained an all-white conference, and even went back on their pledge to the Student YWCA by openly recruiting white women to attend the segregated conference at Blue Ridge. This angered the young women of the student YWCA, and at its annual conference in 1944, they "finally stopped waiting for the men to come around," and voted to withdraw all support for any segregated future conferences.[8] In so doing, the Student YWCA openly broke with the Student YMCA in the South over the issue of racial segregation. Black Student YWCA field secretary Rose Mae Catchings recalled that this firm position of "intentionality," formalized by the adoption of the Interracial Charter, made all the difference between the Student YWCA and the Student YMCA. It signified that the YWCA intended to create an integrated organization, not just a white organization where blacks were welcome,

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[8]Rosalie Oakes interview with Frances Anton, May 6, 1982, New York. *Southern Women, the Student YWCA, and Race (1920-1944) Collection*, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

which she called the "pretend elimination of racism."[9] Thus, beginning in 1945, the Student YWCA held annual interracial conferences with the black Student YMCA in the South until the white YMCA finally relented and opened the Blue Ridge conference up to everyone in 1952.

Despite the intransigence of some within the Student YMCA to formally integrate, the Student YWCA's stand for integration did have an effect on white male students in the region, whose attitudes about racial equality were evolving on an individual basis. This is evident in deliberations of students associated with the Y throughout the South in the late 1940s. Each year the Southern Area YMCA Council held an annual meeting for representatives from all the Campus YMCAs in the region. Morehouse College in Atlanta hosted this event in December 1947. This meeting was a one-day affair, and contrasted with conferences such as the one held at Blue Ridge, which

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9 Catchings recalled that by accommodating the Student YMCA, "we [the YWCA] made some bad judgments in that" up until 1944. As the African American (adult) field secretary for the Student YWCA in the Southern region, Catchings routinely participated in both the Kings Mountain and the Blue Ridge Y conferences. She roomed with other white adult Y mentors, but was conscious of being among the few "token" black leaders at the Blue Ridge conference. At the 1942 conference, Lillian Smith spoke to this mostly-white group as the keynote speaker, but some of the students booed her when she made several analogies about the evils of racial segregation. Catchings recalled feeling "as angry as I'd ever been in my life because I felt these students had betrayed me too." The situation was all the worse, she recalled, because "so many of the so-called advisors – the men – had sat on their rears" during the incident. Catchings' soon-to-be husband, an African American YMCA advisor, was slated to close the conference with communion the next day, but instead, he told the conferees that after the experience of rejection the night before, communion was not possible. He directed the students to retreat to their rooms for private prayer before leaving for home. Rose Mae Catchings interview with Frances Anton, n.d., circa 1982, *Southern Women, the Student YWCA, and Race (1920-1944) Collection*, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

entailed several days of fellowship, recreation, and shared housing and eating facilities. The keynote speaker, Dr. Edwin Espy, Executive Secretary of the National YMCA Council, challenged the white and black male students who had gathered together from mostly segregated schools in the South to live up to the ideals of the YMCA. The Student Y, Espy exhorted, should strive to be the "conscience of the campus," a "world movement," an "intercollegiate movement,'" a "coeducational movement," and an "interracial movement."[10] That day the regional council of the student YMCA voted to follow the YWCA's example and to have only one "interracial coeducational official conference," in an effort to cultivate better race relations.

Apparently the South Carolina YMCA was unhappy with this decision, which contradicted the practice of holding separate conferences for whites at the YMCA facility in Blue Ridge, North Carolina. They decided to sponsor their own, whites-only Southern conference a few months later, in defiance of the Southern YMCA Council's decision. Individual University Y's then faced the decision of how to respond to this action by the South Carolina Y. Charles Foley, president of the UNC Campus Y, asked his fellow student cabinet members to deliberate and develop an official statement of policy "regarding Practices of Race Relations in Southern Universities." Foley saw this as especially important because of the recent racial incidents at universities in the region

10 Summary of remarks, included in "Report of the Southern Area Student YMCA Council Meeting, Morehouse College, Atlanta, Georgia, December 20-22, 1947," In Cabinet, YMCA 1947-1949, in Subseries 6-Cabinet, Box 2, *Records of the Campus Y*, #40126, *University Archives*, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

which he believed "have dictated our taking a stand on this question."[11] The local uproar over the admittance of black law students at the flagship public universities in Oklahoma and Arkansas attracted international attention in 1948, casting the South in a negative light and putting racial integration on the agenda for other states who hoped to avoid similar controversy. [12]

The UNC students who attended the 1947 Southern regional meeting at Morehouse, Pete Burks and Sam Magill, prepared a list of facts from the conference that had relevance to the issue of racial integration. Among them was the increasing tendency of religious emphasis in Y programs to become "more and more associated with ameliorating our community problems."[13] Also, they acknowledged that the YWCA in South would only cooperate with the YMCA if they conducted activities on an interracial

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11 Letter from Foley to Cabinet Members, February 6, 1948, In Cabinet, YMCA 1947-1949, Subseries 6-Cabinet, Box 2, *Records of the Campus Y*, #40126, University Archives, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

12 Besides unfavorable national press coverage of these two incidents, students abroad also took significant interest in instances of racial discrimination and prejudice at Southern universities. The International Union of Students (IUS), which represented 50,000 students, sent a letter of protest to the US ambassador in London when the law school at the University of Oklahoma rejected George W. McLaurin's application for admission. The school did admit McLaurin after a state court mandated them to do so, but McLaurin was forced to sit in a separate part of the classroom, away from the white students. McLaurin later filed suit and the Supreme Court ruled in his favor in 1950, establishing an important precedent. Silas Hunt was admitted as the first African American to the University of Arkansas School of Law in 1948.

13 Summary of remarks, included in "Report of the Southern Area Student YMCA Council Meeting, Morehouse College, Atlanta, Georgia, December 20-22, 1947," In Cabinet, YMCA 1947-1949, in Subseries 6-Cabinet, Box 2, *Records of the Campus Y*, #40126, University Archives, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

basis. As was often the case in this period, the student YWCA refused to budge on the principle of racial equality, even though it went against law and custom. Because the YMCA and the YWCA operated together at UNC, this issue was key to their continued partnership. The UNC Y also had a history of holding off-campus fellowship with students from nearby black colleges since the 1930s. Given these factors, they were more inclined to side with their YWCA companions on campus, than their YMCA counterparts a state away. They crafted a strong statement of policy that went beyond the realm of Y activities in January 1951, declaring that the admission of black students to UNC was a "necessary and natural step in the fulfillment of a democratic Christian society."[14] The Campus Y thereafter continued to be a leading force for integration on the UNC campus.

THE INTERRACIAL CHARTER

1944 was an exciting year, as the Student YWCA finally took a firm stand for racial equality in the South. The Student YWCA also pressed its parent organization, the YWCA of the USA, to make a similar commitment to ending segregation. After two years of lobbying, in 1946, the YWCA adopted the "Interracial Charter" by majority vote at its biennial convention, marking a turning point in the organization's commitment to racial equality. The Charter set forth the "conscious goal" of the "inclusion of Negro women and girls in the mainstream of Association life." Officially, African Americans had been a part of the YWCA since 1893, when the first segregated black YWCA formed in Dayton, Ohio. Since the 1920s, black women served as leaders at all levels and

14 See Cabinet, YMCA 1950-1952, Subseries 6-Cabinet, Box 2, *Records of the Campus Y*, #40126, University Archives, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

comprised 10% of the membership.[15] But matters of race relations remained largely the province of individual associations to sort out. The most common arrangement was all-white YWCA associations that approved the formation of all-black "Phyllis Wheatley" branches in their communities. Frequently these segregated community Ys only met across racial lines to discuss budgetary matters, or in regional conferences. The Interracial Charter reflected the many attempts of the organization's African American membership to secure equal treatment—particularly among its student division.[16]

Students were the driving force behind the Interracial Charter, as their commitment to interracial organization had grown steadily since the 1920s. But the debate over the Interracial Charter took place amidst a sense of urgency created by World War II. The United States entry into the war created new roles and experiences for American women and youth, and many considered racial inequality with a new perspective. The YWCA received federal funds to aid in the war effort, and large numbers of women worked through the USO and traveled abroad to assist service men and women. In correspondence and publications throughout the war years, young people compared the political and racial ideologies of the United States with the Axis powers

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15 Juliet Ober Bell, Helen J. Wilkins, and Young Women's Christian Association of the U.S.A. Commission to Gather Interracial Experience., *Interracial Practices in Community YWCAs; A Study Under the Auspices of the Commission to Gather Interracial Experience* (New York, NY: National Board, Y.W.C.A., 1944), 25, 58.

16 For accounts of the struggles of African American YWCA members to acquire resources and leadership positions within the YWCA in the early 20th century, see Paula Giddings, *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America* (New York: W. Morrow, 1984), 155–158; Hall, *Revolt Against Chivalry*, 83–86.

they hoped to defeat. The principles of democracy and equality, if they were important enough to fight and die for, should *mean* something, they mused.

The YWCA convention theme in 1946 was "One World Under God," and this nod to Christian purpose in a global context provided a poignant backdrop for the debate of the proposed charter. The charter declared the objective of racial equality in broad and unequivocal terms: "Wherever there is injustice on the basis of race, whether in the community, the nation, or the world, our protest must be clear and our labor for its removal vigorous and steady. And what we urge on others we are constrained to practice ourselves." The Interracial Charter thus broke with a history of de facto segregation and obligated all YWCA members to a mission of racial equality that blatantly countered social custom and regional laws.

To be sure, not all community YWCAs agreed with this objective, and some insisted that the national YWCA had ventured outside its policy-making authority. Ambiguity on matters of race had allowed YWCAs to operate for decades in communities where white supremacy remained unchallenged. Membership and financial backing were both at stake. Anticipating this, the Nashville community YWCA sent letters in advance of the meeting to two hundred other community YWCAs, warning that the adoption of the Interracial Charter would mean the end of the organization in the South.[17] Indeed, Gladys Gilkey Calkins, a white woman who was president of the YWCA National Board, wrote in 1960 that the Y knew the dangers of taking such a bold stand, particularly "the real risk that liberal opinions on the subject of race would be at

17 Dorothy I. Height, *Open Wide the Freedom Gates: A Memoir* (New York: Public Affairs, 2003), 115.

once labeled 'radical' and 'communistic.'[18] But the adults proved receptive to the students' challenge. Dr. Benjamin Elijah Mays, the keynote speaker and president of Morehouse College in Atlanta, spoke to the convention about the evils of segregation on both whites and blacks. "I realize what you have before you, what you are trying to do, and…most likely all across the country you will hear people saying, 'The time is not ripe.'" But, he insisted, "In the Christian ethic, the time is always ripe to do justice. Given your honorable purpose as the Young Women's Christian Association, if the time is not ripe, then it is your job to ripen the time!"[19] Enough delegates agreed, and the Interracial Charter became an official creed of the YWCA.

Dorothy Height recalled the passage of the Interracial Charter "[a]fter several days of hard work, discussions, soul-searching, and tears."[20] Height, an African American whose activism for minority and women's rights spanned her entire life, joined the staff of the national YWCA in 1944 as secretary for interracial education at the age of thirty-one. She was filled with hope by this momentous event. When YWCA president Mary Ingraham proclaimed the adoption of the Interracial Charter as the "conscious goal" of the organization, the white executive asked the two thousand members assembled, "Do you think it will be easy to implement this charter?" The answer was a "muffled roar" of

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18 Gladys Gilkey Calkins, "The Negro in the Young Women's Christian Association; a Study of the Development of YWCA Interracial Policies and Practices in Their Historical Setting" (MA Thesis, George Washington University, 1960), 92.

19 Height, *Open Wide the Freedom Gates*, 115.

20 Ibid.

"No," but Height recalled that it sounded like "an acceptance – of both the charter and the challenge it presented."[21]

A "STEP BY STEP" APPROACH TO HUMAN RELATIONS

The YWCA's adoption of a bold commitment to racial equality in 1946 signified an important shift in organizational purpose and the increasing influence of students in the postwar period. But the real work lay in implementing the principle of integration. A large gap often existed between the student and community divisions of the YWCA. After the passage of the Interracial Charter, Dorothy Height traveled throughout the country for the YWCA, advising chapters on human relations and better ways to implement the Charter. She encountered chilly receptions from community YWCAs in many parts of the South. Her first stop was in Dallas, Texas, where the executive of the local YWCA called her hotel shortly after she arrived and said, "They tell me that you are a Negro. I didn't ask for any Negro to come here."[22] The tough work of interracial

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21 Ibid., 116. Height recounted, "It was a great moment for me. I felt part of a movement that had not only been embraced by the YWCA but also seemed to be gathering steam across the United States. In that huge hall in Atlantic City, women of every creed and color looked the race issue in the eye and agreed: no matter how hard it will be, we are committed to bringing our daily activity truly into line with our ideals.

At that moment I was prouder than ever to be part of the history of this courageous organization. Of course, the YWCA realized that its program would never be a panacea for the evils of racism in the world. But the convention action of 1946 committed every community YWCA to a sincere effort to work toward its goal of inclusiveness."

22 A year later, in 1947, Height traveled to Fort Worth, to "learn" from the YWCA there, which was one of the seventeen community YWCAs in the South to make substantial progress on interracial activity. When she and her white colleague

exchange was easier, Height found, among young people. But this was new ground, and it took some trial and error to figure out exactly how to make interracial gatherings effective. Height met with a newly integrated group of girls at a community YWCA who told her that their numbers had dwindled since the passage of the Charter. When she asked why, they said, "Now all we do is race-relate, but we'd much rather work together on a community project. We want to do something!"[23]

From these experiences Height learned that it was important for people to gather around productive activities and to go beyond introspective, painful conversations about how to relate to each other. At the same time, both whites and blacks had to learn how to trust one other and express themselves honestly. "Looking back now, it all seems so simple. But then we knew little about how to help people transcend their fears. We had little experience of working interracially to accomplish something that was larger than any one of us could do alone."[24] Common experiences enabled individuals on both sides of the color line to learn how to communicate honestly about the impact of race. In one conversation, Height's white YWCA colleague Grace Martin, said with exasperation, "Dorothy, you always bring up race no matter what we are talking about!" To which Height replied that in her experience, there was a racial dimension to just about everything, and what mattered was to realize how different their life experiences were because of it. "When you feel free enough to bring up race yourself, she replied, "then I

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arrived, however, they learned that the executive director had been sacked, and her racially progressive views were not largely shared. Ibid., 117, 119–120.

23 Ibid., 116.

24 Ibid., 117.

will know that I have done my job." [25] Height recalled that this exchange created a lasting bond between the two women.

The Student YWCA had pioneered in the area of human relations in the South for some time. In the 1920s and 1930s, regional YWCA secretaries traveled throughout the South for the purpose of encouraging interracial understanding and organizing discrete interracial gatherings of college students. They often spoke of their work in terms of "personal relations," and this phrase implied male-female relationships as well as white-black relationships. An external assessment of the work of Student YWCAs and Student YMCAs throughout the United States through the mid-1930s noted that the South, relative to the rest of the nation, maintained almost complete separation of white and blacks in education and other areas of "organized life." The South also displayed a tendency toward separate men's and women's colleges, in contrast to more frequent coeducational institutions in other regions. Further, the prevailing attitudes and pressures that characterized other aspects of life in the South influenced Southern colleges:

> There is tension in the area of Negro-white relationships, and in the relationships of men and women. Tension between the sexes is further aggravated when the factors of race enter. At the present time there is a kind of vigilance on the part of certain powerful forces in the community to employ intimidation and even repression against any fundamental deviation from the prevailing pattern of educational, political, or social behavior.[26]

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25 Ibid.

26 National Commission on Consultations about Student Christian Work, *The Organization of Student Christian Work; a Report of the National Commission on Consultations About Student Christian Work, March 1934-March 1935* (New York, 1935), 32. *YWCA Collection*, Box 736, Sophia Smith Collection, Neilson Library, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

Although the authors of this 1935 study do not describe the nature of the tensions between the sexes, the fact of essential separation in education played an important part in this assessment. To the extent that education is a form of socialization, rigid separation between sexes at such a critical juncture set the stage for separation and distance throughout life. The report credited the Student YWCA and the Student YMCA as the only organizations actively working to ease the tension between the races and the sexes in the South.[27]

After the war, the Student YWCA took the lead in human relations training, with an initial push in the immediate postwar period, and then later projects funded by foundation grants after the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954, and the 1960 sit-ins.[28] Dorothy Height wrote a primer on human relations in 1946. This manual, updated several times through the 1950s, provided concrete instruction which YWCA practitioners used widely as they attempted to implement the principles of the 1946 Interracial Charter.[29] Height recalled that she found it difficult to create a "how to" guide on human relations. "I struggled with the very concept; there was something about a primer that I didn't like. Why was it so hard for people to understand how to get along with one another? What on earth would a primer on human relations look like?"[30]

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27 The Student Ys in North Carolina and in Florida, in particular, had taken the initiative in these areas, and "frequently these ventures have been interracial." As of 1935, the South boasted 302 Student YMCA and YWCAs on college and university campuses, both white and black, and many other denominational student groups (the largest was Baptist) not counted for the purposes of the study. Ibid.

28 See Chapter Six for more on these initiatives.

29 Dorothy I. Height, *Step by Step with Interracial Groups* (New York, NY: Woman's Press, 1946).

30 Height, *Open Wide the Freedom Gates*, 113.

Difficult as it was to initially enumerate, this guide on human relations outlines the philosophy and assumptions in which both adults and young people at the Y operated as they attempted to cultivate greater racial understanding in the South.

Titled "Step by Step," the primer emphasized the importance of honestly assessing one's own fears, biases, and frustrations, and trying to understand other people's points of view. The primary objective of human relations, the Y primer described, was to arrive at a point of mutual understanding. *Step by Step* outlined situational dynamics that favored true understanding between individuals and how to create them. An important insight of human relations held that "understanding" could be cultivated by time and trained facilitators. The bulk of the guide emphasizes practical strategies, giving examples of activities that relate directly to the "the needs and interests" of the entire group, rather than abstract "ivory tower" exercises.[31] The primer advised ways that interracial group leaders could make use of individual talents without reference to race.[32] A section titled "Little Things that Make a Difference," suggests simple courtesies to extend to everyone, such as formal titles of "Miss" and "Mrs.," regardless of their race. It also addressed common misperceptions and stereotypes, explaining why the minstrel, sentimental references to "dear old mammy" or other domestic black workers, and the usage of various words to insult young black youth, would ultimately prevent interracial understanding.[33] Height's primer explained that human relations entailed

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31 Height, *Step by Step with Interracial Groups*, 16–17.

32 An entire section of the manual advises ways to cultivate black leaders without calling attention to their status as racial minorities ("Use Minority Leadership for Skills, not for "Race").

33 Height identifies common stereotypes such as the notion that African Americans are tolerant of all other groups, and that African Americans are gifted singers. She

relating to individuals on a basic human level, and required the experience of real contact with one another:

> Too often when we tried to meet fear of interracial experience on a rational level, we failed because that kind of fear is nearly always irrational. Many have assumed that the pattern of segregation exists because of prejudice. Quite the contrary, it seems to me that people are prejudiced because they have been estranged by separation. They don't know one another, and they fear the unknown.

The YWCA worked to end centuries of alienation by getting blacks and whites together in the same room, on equal footing. But that was not enough; one of the lessons the YWCA learned through human relations work in the immediate postwar era was that tasks and meaningful activities that people participated in together created the necessary environment for better human relations. On this basis, the YWCA organized seminar and retreat activities throughout the postwar period, which increasingly blended whites, blacks, and international guests.

"WE ARE A WORLD MOVEMENT"

The large size and elaborate structure of the YWCA created unprecedented opportunities for the exchange of people and ideas throughout the organization. Moreover, local chapters had the autonomy to elect their own leaders and choose their

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> also relays the example of a white speaker addressing 2,000 enlisted black men at a military camp in Texas who experienced hisses and boos when he said he was happy to be there "because he had many fine 'Niggra' friends." Height explained that "Nothing the Negro officer in charge could say in defense of the speaker was adequate to erase the impression he had created with the use of the term. As the soldiers talked about it later, one thought was crudely yet consistently stated: 'White folk can always figure out a way to insult Negroes, even when we invite them to come into our activities.' And, 'That's just a sly way they have of saying 'nigger.'" Height, *Step by Step with Interracial Groups*, 25, 32.

own agendas. The central purpose of the organization was to expand women's opportunities for fellowship, personal enrichment, and leadership. All of these factors fueled democratic practice. A student who participated in activities of her local campus YWCA, for example, was exposed to the influence of women involved in the community, regional, national, and world YWCAs. Newsletters, exchanges, conferences and frequent visits by national and international visitors created a wide network of women with a range of expertise that enriched the programming and experiences available to student Y participants. This was a significant feature of the Y, and it held true even in geographically isolated regions of the South. When students walked into the YWCA, it was like they were stepping into a whole new world.

This worldwide perspective intensified during and after World War II. In March 1945, two months before the Germans' unconditional surrender, the *World's Y.W.C.A. Monthly* featured the happenings of the student YWCAs in many countries and their anticipated emphases after the war. In China, for example, the magazine reported that "Young Christian People's Associations" could be found in the majority of colleges and universities there. "The quality of fellowship or friendship is the draw," explained a YW field secretary.[34] The Student YWCA of the United States, similarly, as a "lay religious group of women," occupied a unique position in college communities. It was considered somewhat "within the Church but different from church groups" and

34 The students who attended Chinese YWCA functions were a mixed group, according to the YW field secretary there. "Some are new to Christianity," whereas "some too pious tend to hive off, being too good for the "Y" type of Christian…and in some places half the members may be non-Christian or people 'halting between two opinions.'" "Students in China Today," *World's YWCA Monthly*, March 23, 1945.

benefited from partnerships with student YMCAs.[35] The Student YWCA of the USA focused its efforts on race relations, economics, political effectiveness, women's responsibility, and religion.

In 1945 the student division of the USA YWCA identified a specific area of concern: the "[e]ducation in right attitudes toward members of other races." Here and in national postwar publications, the YWCA emphasized the structural and social issues that created the conditions for prejudice. Student Y members could no longer think in terms of the "immediate environment" in which they operated, however, such as the college campus. To be effective, the Student YWCA had to consider the "wider environment of society itself." This process would require "a sound knowledge of the underlying forces that cause inequalities and injustices."[36] As long as employment remained a real concern, fascism was a competing solution to the problem of unemployment, and "the American dream" was denied to millions, the Student YWCA acted on the precept that the student "Movement" had to take a wider view as they determined their plan of action and the "social understanding and practical skills" that would be necessary to carry it out. The solutions to these postwar realities would require new ways of thinking. In order to do this, the Student Y argued that "new patterns of cooperation must be forged locally, regionally, nationally and internationally" to address these problems effectively.[37]

One World YWCA official related her detailed impressions from a visit to campus and community YWCA's in the American Midwest. She described conditions

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35 "The Y.W.C.A. on the American College Campus," *World's YWCA Monthly*, March 23, 1945.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.

there as ripe with the possibility for postwar class and racial conflict, akin to that which followed World War I. Because of wartime production, citizens enjoyed full employment, including women and African Americans, the latter voicing their resentment of segregation and discrimination. At the same time, the YWCA observer noted the flourishing of fundamentalist sects touting a peculiar millenarianism "opposed to all social reform and propagating hatred of minority groups." During her travels to various Student Y associations, she participated in lively discussions about women's postwar roles. She apparently visited only segregated white and African American YWCA events, and her overall impression from each was an "eagerness to share in the world movement, to hear news of the Associations in other countries, to have part in plans for the future." She noted that the youth exhibited the "dawning realization of identity of interests and needs with youth [from] all over the world." But in conversations with students, personal problems and fears were "close to the surface," and Y members displayed a keen sense of these issues in both social and individual terms. The problems of the postwar world were numerous, but the World YWCA official found reason to take heart: "These are the stuff of the future – the international mind and a vital social sense."[38]

Some students looked to Christianity, while others looked to democracy, as the best guide for postwar reconstruction. The YWCA often combined these approaches. "World fellowship" offered a useful way to study foreign countries, and for students to form cross-cultural relationships, regardless of political differences. In an instructional guide on this subject, YWCA official Dorothy Groeling explained that the YWCA's

38 Ibid.

function as a "home away from home," providing for the physical and spiritual needs of women and girls, was as important in the postwar era as it had been in 1870. But, she asked rhetorically, did it matter what kind of draperies they hung or what kind of recreation they offered at the gym if women did not put equal effort into creating a peaceful world?[39] Ruined buildings could be rebuilt, but the creation of a world without bombs was paramount, and the way to do this was to capitalize on the current interest in world affairs caused by the war. "Long experience has shown that world fellowship activities can *arouse interest in international relations*," she explained, and the YWCA had a special role and responsibility to play in cultivating this sensibility. World fellowship programs "give meaning to concepts often lightly used, such as 'becoming world citizens' or 'building a world community.'"[40] World fellowship underscored people, rather than ideologies or governments, and it engendered the awareness that national experience shaped policy. Struggles for power were unavoidable on the local and international level, but if people were given accurate information, she argued, they could at least make decisions based on facts, not prejudices.

Groeling articulated an assumption that ran through the work of the Student YWCA in this time period: "What is good for our own country is good for the world, because peace and prosperity are indivisible."[41] The goal was for youth to actually act on internationalist convictions, she stressed, so that nations would be more inclined to work

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39 Young Women's Christian Association of the U.S.A. and Dorothy Groeling, *World Fellowship in Action. How Its Program Is Planned and Carried Out* (New York: Woman's Press, 1946), 20.

40 Ibid., 22. (emphasis in original)

41 Ibid., 21.

together to prevent future war. The YWCA was a worldwide organization dedicated to the promotion of democracy within its ranks and in the communities in which it operated. As the YWCA promoted democracy, so too, could individuals within the YWCA further "the greatest cause of history." Groeling explained:

> There is a definite connection between helping to rebuild and strengthen the YWCA in Manila or Brussels, and supporting the United Nations Organization in its task of building a world of peace, justice and security. We want the YWCA's advances to be permanent. We want the same benefits for our fellow members and for all men as we do for our own country. And we know that our own peace and security depend on theirs.[42]

Like other women's organizations, the YWCA made peace and international understanding a primary concern in the postwar years. In its associations in numerous countries, it focused on the practical needs and concerns of local youth and women. In some ways it operated parallel to organizations like the United Nations, with emissaries from all over the world visiting and working in foreign countries, and sharing their experiences as women when they visited and returned home.

The lessons that Y staff gleaned from their international work informed the democratic mission of the YWCA of the USA. Writing in 1950, Esther Park, the YWCA field representative in Korea from 1947 to 1962, reported that women enjoyed a new status after Korea's liberation from Japan, and the YWCA was "the best organized women's organization in Korea at the present." As such, it was best situated to help Korean women and girls learn their new rights through education and training. "As a world movement," Park explained, "the YWCA has a heritage and a body of experience in democratic ways of work and Christian living which can be a definite contribution to

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42 Ibid., 22.

the country."[43] She stressed that democracy was not just a political system, but more concretely a "way of life which comes through education – education in families, in communities, in schools." As elsewhere, the YWCA sought to address the most urgent needs of the women and girls in Korea, through formal night school courses, informal group seminars, recreation activities, relief services, and leadership training.[44] She connected women's advances in that country with the YWCA, which functioned as a "tower of strength" amid personal uncertainty and political and social turmoil. It also provided "a sense of belonging – the importance of which I cannot stress too much." After fifteen years of work in Korea, Parks reflected that the transition to democracy for any nation was no easy task, and it depended on "faith in the dignity of man, on self-discipline, freedom and equality of people." She argued that no one can give these qualities to people, but that individuals "must be educated to take them." Further, she argued, "When we help the YWCAs in newly developing countries, we are directly helping to build democratic nations."[45] Parks' impressions echoed the philosophy of the YWCA in general - the YWCA provided vital education so that women could participate fully in social and civic life.[46]

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43 Esther Park, "Letter to Foreign Division, National Board, YWCA of the United States", January 9, 1950, *YWCA Collection*, Box 336, Folder 8, Sophia Smith Collection, Neilson Library, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

44 Ibid.

45 Esther Park, "Report on Korea – To the National Board, Speech by Ester Park," November 1, 1962, *YWCA Collection*, Box 336, Folder 8, Sophia Smith Collection, Neilson Library, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

46 These impressions about the YWCA's international work were also confirmed by the organizers of the Peace Corps in the early 1960s. The YWCA was among the few organizations (including the NSA) that the U.S. government requested assistance

Throughout the postwar era, the YWCA continued to operate as a social service organization, but also as an active partner in the promotion of democracy at home and abroad. The YWCA contributed to a feeling of international solidarity among young women in the world through a multi-pronged approach, with its efforts for industrial workers as well as students. As an organization with roots dating to the industrial era, the YWCA had long been attuned to the needs of working women around the world. In postwar Germany, the YWCA opened its doors in a working class neighborhood in Berlin, providing recreational opportunities and childcare services for young working women. It was among young working women in the United States, too, that a strong push for interracial fellowship emerged in the 1930s.

The YWCA aimed to bring not just students, but also working women together, for their own conferences each summer. It was difficult, however, to find facilities that would host interracial YWCA conferences in the South. Though the threat of community pushback was ever present, as the Klan threats to the YM/YWCA conference in 1946 demonstrated, the mountains of North Carolina nevertheless offered some of the only private facilities where the YWCA could plan interracial retreats in the South. A retired white army officer who was sympathetic to the Y's efforts offered his property, Camp Merriewoode, in the Black Mountains of North Carolina. The YWCA held a conference there in the summer of 1947, without incident except for police intimidation at the train stop after the conference was over. The YM/YWCA held an interracial student conference there again the following year. This time they were not so lucky. Students developed film from the conference at a local pharmacy, and within a few days, the

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from as it developed its own program along the lines of existing YWCA international projects.

proprietor posted an enlarged copy of one of the photographs of black and white students in his window with the caption exclaiming that the YWCA was mixing the races.

The next week, the YWCA planned to host a separate conference for young industrial workers, including women from other countries. In advance of their arrival, the YWCA project director and the camp owner went into town to appeal for help from the local authorities, with no luck. Dorothy Height received the assurance of the local NAACP president that he would intercede on their behalf with the mayor and sheriff; he said that they owed their positions in part to the black vote he had secured for them. But before dawn the next morning, three hundred Klansmen raided the empty camp with bats and pipes. The white camp owner assured them that the YWCA group arriving that day would be peaceful, but the incident scared the local NAACP president, who said that the mayor advised against holding the event. He explained to Dorothy Height, "You know how it is down here. The sheriff has already left town."[47]

Once again, despite the Klan's intimidation, the YWCA held its 1948 industrial working women's conference as planned. The young conferees were well aware of the local hostilities, but remained determined to proceed. Height recalled that "[e]ven when Klan members rode nightly through the grounds, pointing blinding searchlights and hurling racial slurs through our windows, the women seemed fearless. They even went into town to shop, although no one took film to be processed at the pharmacy." Organizers recalled that the fact that the conference was all women helped to curb the potential for violence. Local vigilantes reserved their worst tactics for interracial gatherings of men and women, which were often perceived as a threat to white

47 Height, *Open Wide the Freedom Gates*, 123.

womanhood. Nevertheless, the experience shook some of the international visitors. Height noted that the young women from China and Lebanon "came near to hysteria before the conference ended. They were especially perplexed that they could be accepted at the motel but I could not, when we all had about the same skin color." [48]

The shared experience of war offered a point of unifying, cross-national commonality for the youth of the YWCA. In November 1951, Mizuho Kunugi, a Japanese exchange student, spoke to YWCA members gathered to hear her during her two-week stay in Norfolk, Virginia. Kunugi described the devastation of World War II, and the loss of confidence among Japanese youth. [49] Kunugi pointed out, however, that the destabilization had produced positive outcomes as well. Japanese women, long relegated to the sidelines of Japanese society, now enjoyed newfound rights and the ability to attain higher and more visible positions than had been possible before the war.[50] Similar to Esther Park's account of the YWCA in Korea, Kunugi stressed the importance of the Y in helping to lay the foundations for democracy by connecting young Japanese women with their counterparts abroad.[51] Kunugi spent a year traveling and studying in

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48 Ibid.

49 *YWCA Collection*, Box 336, Folder 4, Sophia Smith Collection, Neilson Library, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

50 Japanese women gained the right to vote in 1945, and women won national offices as well as government commissioner positions in rural districts in the 1946 election. The Japanese YWCA grew rapidly. By 1951, over 13,000 women had joined the YWCA, and the organization boasted 22 university chapters.

51 Many preferred the "old totalitarian Japan," Kunugi cautioned, and reforming these deep-seated political values would require the kind of training that only organizations like the YWCA could provide. The Japanese YWCA hosted meetings and speakers on public and international affairs, and produced weekly newsletters focused on educating Japanese women on "ways of democratically thinking and acting." She praised the efforts of American youth from the Y to

the United States under the auspices of the World YWCA, and she attended the 1951 annual student YWCA citizenship institute in Washington, D.C, which focused on American domestic and international policy. [52] She wrote that while she was "very grateful" for U.S. assistance to underdeveloped countries, she also hoped "that those policies could be carried effectively on the basis of good understanding of people in countries other than the United States."[53] The YWCA, she believed, offered a means for the younger generation of the world to build trust and cooperation so that they could solve their common problems together.

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reach out to their nation's erstwhile foes, sending chocolates, socks, and other token gifts, did much to undo the enmity of war, and encourage openness to new political ideas.

52 In addition to Norfolk, she visited YWCAs in San Francisco and New York, and completed six months of coursework at the University of Denver's School of Social Work. At each stop on her tour, Kunugi shared her own wartime experiences—including the loss of a sister—and relayed the heartfelt wishes of the youthful survivors of Hiroshima for enduring world peace. She became increasingly frank in her condemnations of all wars during her yearlong stay. She was surprised to discover how many American women shared her sentiments, and later recounted conversations with American mothers whose sons had died in the Pacific Theater.

53 Kunugi was in Washington, DC during the annual worldwide fellowship week observed by the YWCA. She attended fellowship services at the National Cathedral commemorating the week. She recalled a poignant (and telling) scene from the service, as young American girls representing YWCA chapters from across the country walked down the aisle bearing bags of money that they had collected for YWCA chapters abroad. International students dressed in their nation's traditional garb waited at the end of the aisle to receive the donations. Kunugi remarked that this scene filled her with emotion because she knew well how difficult it was to raise funds for YWCA activities, and this exchange represented the friendship and great efforts of American women to assist their international sisters.

Kunugi also witnessed the beginnings of a postwar American racial rapprochement, attending an interracial student panel during her travels. Though the African American students on the panel spoke frankly about their mistreatment by whites, Kunugi noted the panel's healing rather than divisive tone. The students conversed, she observed, with "a sense of sharing the problem with each other," rather than blame, and sought a common solution through "cooperative effort." During her time in the U.S., the friendships Kunugi developed convinced her of the inherent power of personal relations to shape and improve relations between nations. Kunugi's evolving beliefs reflected the changing priorities of the American student YWCA. After the war, the organization created American-international exchange programs with the express purpose of improving international relations. But the problem of racial inequality in the United States increasingly held international significance and became the top priority.

The YWCA's focus on interracial issues and fellowship, international cooperation, and its claim to be a "world movement" rendered it suspect among some Americans. Like many other progressive organizations, it faced "fellow traveler" criticisms and red-baiting that were prevalent in the late 1940s and early 1950s. In 1948, after the YWCA declined an invitation from the right-wing American Constitutional Education League to search for and purge its ranks of possible Communist elements, Joseph Kamp published an indictment titled *Behind the Lace Curtains of the YWCA*. To underscore the insinuation that this womens' space harbored something fearful, the book cover depicted the vague outlines of the blue triangle logo of the YWCA, as seen through translucent curtains – but with one significant change. A hammer and sickle replaced the "C." Kamp claimed that the YWCA was a dangerous presence in American society. He used quotes from YWCA publications about racial equality and international cooperation as evidence of Communist subversion. The organization was many times larger than the

Communist party, he noted, and especially hazardous because of the influence its programs had on young women.[54] American YWCA members might not be aware that their programs promoted Communist propaganda, he asserted. This unwitting complicity made the women of the Y even more dangerous. Kamp reminded the reader of Thomas Huxley's observation that "No witness is so dishonest as a really good woman with a cause to serve."[55] That same year, the House Committee on Un-American Activities published a series of pamphlets, "100 Things You Should Know About Communism," identifying the YWCA as a "Communist Target." [56]

Though the YWCA faced its share of red-baiting, its long history of providing practical services to address the needs of American communities helped it weather the anticommunist storm of the early postwar era. The pool, gym, cafeteria, community service projects, dance classes, seminars, and lectures offered by the YWCA were appealing and commonplace enough to minimize the number of people who viewed it with suspicion. An attack on the YWCA was an attack on the women of these communities, and they tended to push back strongly at such accusations. The "C" in the YWCA provided important cover. But equally compelling was the function of the YWCA as a positive interlocutor for American democracy at home and abroad. Though

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54 Joseph P. Kamp, *Behind the Lace Curtains of the YWCA; A Report on the Extent and Nature of Infiltration by Communist, Socialist and Other Left Wing Elements, and the Resultant Red Complexion of Propaganda Disseminated In,* (New York: Constitutional Educational League, 1948).

55 Ibid., 5.

56 Howard Zinn, *The Zinn Reader: Writings on Disobedience and Democracy* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 1997), 485. In his chapter, "Where to Look for a Communist," Zinn mentions that this pamphlet is in his files on HUAC, explaining, "they have files on me, I have files on them."

the YWCA stressed mutual friendship and understanding, it unequivocally promoted democracy. American women traveled abroad, and young women traveled to the United States through the YWCA for training and education, sharing their personal stories about the importance of freedom in their home countries. Though the same dynamic offered some protection to student YWCAs, their greater propensity toward interracial activities made them more vulnerable to such charges.

"TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN"

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, like the University of Texas at Austin, has a long history of a Campus Y activism. In the years during and after World War II, Y programming at both schools focused heavily on evolving notions of citizenship and student responsibilities. The UNC Campus Y held annual meetings in the postwar years that focused on the roles and responsibilities of the student in the world. During this time, the "world cooperation" approach to international affairs became controversial, as it seemed to argue against a bipolar view of international politics. Student organizations, like the Y and the NSA, thus became sanctuaries for open discussion of world problems beyond the rigid constraints of Cold War doctrine. At these gatherings, students openly discussed race, class, and politics – in settings which emphasized the international dimension of these problems. The conferences were usually held off campus, where students discussed the ways in which they could act responsibly to solve the tensions in postwar society.

College students in the Y and the NSA began drawing connections between their country's ideological competition for "hearts and minds," and the ways in which it continued to fall short of its stated ideals. They discussed human relations in the context of empathy for others and attempts to reach agreement, including the quest for

understanding between Americans and foreigners.[57] But emphasis on human relations functioned, increasingly, as a way to bridge social divides and to lend support to domestic struggles for equality.

As a concept, human relations encompassed basic forms of human communication, but it also offered a means to critique segregation on Southern campuses. Y Southern regional director Rosalie Oakes recalled that throughout this period, human relations and international programming were often "two sides of the same coin." Oakes crisscrossed the American South from 1945 to 1955, meeting with students, faculty, and school administrators at 168 different campuses.[58] She traveled to areas where racial segregation had gone unquestioned for generations, returning each year to organize conferences at which students from segregated colleges could interact and experience fellowship across the color line.[59] The work of organizing interracial gatherings was both

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57 The concept of human relations gained popularity after World War II, when social psychologists and educators promoted the idea that community leaders could be trained in the latest social scientific theories and transformed into "change agents" who would diminish totalitarian impulses and help form a more democratic society. Human relations training entailed isolating trainees from their accustomed surroundings to study issues relating to human and group dynamics. In the 1940s and 1950s, human relations acquired a social activist orientation, as various progressive organizations including the Southern Regional Council worked in what was called the "human relations field." Principles of human relations were eventually adopted by businesses for the purpose of achieving greater organizational effectiveness. See Laura Kim Lee, "Changing Selves, Changing Society: Human Relations Experts and the Invention of T Groups, Sensitivity Training, and Encounter in the United States, 1938-1980" (University of California at Los Angeles, 2002).

58 Rosalie Oakes interview with the author, Arlington, Virginia, June 2007.

59 Oakes worked with two African American women in this position. Further research is needed on the work and experiences of these women and the students with whom they worked at segregated black colleges.

grueling and dangerous, as the introduction to this chapter suggests. During her visits, Oakes encouraged southern students to see themselves as part of a worldwide community, and many eagerly embraced their newly expanded identities as world citizens. [60] There were many ways, she told students, to get involved in the YWCA's efforts overseas, and to educate themselves on the work of the United Nations, international affairs, and on the basics of national and global citizenship.[61] Oakes' message fused the imperatives of education, international cooperation, and conscious action for racial equality as fundamentals in the Christian faith. Her own experiences gave her a unique vantage point from which to observe Southern college students, campus life, and the possibilities for social change in the postwar South.

"There was something about race," Oakes said, that kept people from being able to openly talk about it. Discussion of international events was one way to get students "in the door," and engaged in learning about people different from themselves. The Y hosted events that addressed international issues, but that gave way, through the avenue of human relations, to questions of racial justice closer to home.[62] Oakes recalled that organizing publicized interracial gatherings that expressly challenged the color line

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60 A weeklong visit to the campus YWCA at UNC Chapel Hill in January of 1954 typified Oakes' travels. She met first with faculty and administrators regarding the national YWCA's programs and events. She then consulted with students and staff on campus Y projects, and delivered a speech to Y members on the current work of the YWCA. "We are striving," she told a rapt audience, "toward a world Y organization." "World-Wide Organization Aim of Y, Visiting Official Says Jan. 6," n.d., *Daily Tar Heel*, YWCA Scrapbook 1954 Feb-April, Box 6 Series - Scrapbooks, in the *Records of the Campus Y*, #40126, University Archives, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

61 Ibid.

62 Rosalie Oakes interview with the author, Arlington, VA, June 2007.

would be both foolhardy and counterproductive.[63] Any event that brought white and black students together in the early postwar South needed a non-racial purpose that was of common interest to young people. Religion served as a primary basis for interracial gatherings. Although the Y was ecumenical and did not adhere to any specific denomination, a shared belief in equality before God served as a logical entryway for many students' interest in interracial meetings and desegregation. As one Y member phrased it, "if the agency is to be Christian and democratic, how can it fail to be interracial?"[64] The Y's association with Christianity thus served a dual function, drawing new student participants, who would otherwise have avoided explicitly interracial organizations and gatherings, and providing cover from potential backlash.

International relations served as another useful pretext for interracial organizing. Young peoples' interest in international affairs helped to get them engaged in learning about people who were different from themselves.[65] A focus on international affairs within the context of the YWCA gave these meeting an air of academic legitimacy, reassuring anxious parents that their children were not flirting with radical politics on campus. But as Campus Ys hosted frequent events dedicated to international issues, they often led, via the linkage of human relations, to discussions of racial justice closer to home.[66] Oakes did not expect to change the hearts and minds of all, or even most, of the students who came to these meetings. She saw herself less as a prophet than as a talent

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63 This sentiment echoes Dorothy Height's experience with groups of YWCA youth after the passage of the Interracial Charter.

64 Height, *Step by Step with Interracial Groups*, 11.

65 Rosalie Oakes interview with the author, Arlington, Virginia, June 2007.

66 Ibid.

scout, looking for those few "lights" with the interest and leadership ability to take on the difficult issues of social justice. More often than not, she met with the types of responses she received from the YMCA's adult leadership in Atlanta, which professed its support for integration while working to ensure that nothing actually changed. Yet student attitudes, she said, were more open than their elders.[67]

Over the course of several years, however, the cumulative effect of Y programming began to produce results. In 1948, the UNC student Y hosted speakers who addressed both the national and international aspects of the "The Complexity of our Age." After these keynote speeches, students broke into commissions that discussed conflicts in the world, including economic, racial, world organization and political tension. The emphasis on tensions in 1948 reflects the uncertainty of the postwar period, and the relationship between these issues that some students began to envisage. It also reflects the major role that race played in the 1948 presidential election, when the Democratic Party split into three factions largely over this issue.[68] The UNC student Y hosted a similar off-campus conference in 1952 on the theme of world understanding. At

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67 Ibid.

68 Many Southern Democrats supported South Carolina Senator Strom Thurmond's candidacy for president under the newly formed States Rights Democratic "Dixiecrat" Party over incumbent Harry Truman, who had recently desegregated the armed forces. Some progressive Southerners backed Henry Wallace's Progressive party platform, which was in favor of greater governmental regulation of big business and the end of discrimination based on race and sex. The Progressives also opposed Truman's escalation of the Cold War against the Soviet Union, but communist association with this party rendered it suspect among even those who supported its ideals (e.g. Norman Thomas, who broke off and ran as the Socialist Party candidate). Kari A. Frederickson, *The Dixiecrat Revolt and the End of the Solid South, 1932-1968* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); John C. Culver and John Hyde, *American Dreamer: The Life and Times of Henry A. Wallace* (New York: Norton, 2000).

this gathering, students discussed class systems in other countries, including panels on caste system in India, class prejudice in Japan, social structure in China, white men in Asia, and social groupings in Europe and South America. Afterwards, students debated what "friends from other countries see in the United States," as well as what students "as citizens of the world" could do to "advance cooperation among the nations" and to "advance cooperation among students at UNC." [69] Race did not appear as an explicit topic in the 1952 conference (perhaps deliberately), the University of North Carolina admitted its first black graduate students in 1951, and would eventually admit black undergraduates in 1955. These were critical test case years, and it is clear that students were aware that the international community was watching. That students were contemplating their responsibilities as "citizens of the world" to create positive "cooperation" on campus suggests that they viewed themselves, and racial segregation, in terms that went beyond merely local. We do not know what exact conclusions individual students drew from these discussions, but the language suggests a re-mapping of community and the recognition that racial segregation was as arbitrary and unjust as other nation's caste systems.

Moreover, students organized interracial meetings through the auspices of the Y all over the South. They took place quietly, though. John Peoples, a former African American student at Jackson State University in Mississippi, recalls that from 1948 to 1950, "I had been one of the activists in a *sub rosa* interracial movement for educational change consisting of college students from Jackson College, Mississippi State University

69 From "Y History" folder in "Campus Y – unprocessed" University Archives, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

and the University of Mississippi." [70] The youths who participated in this movement were members of their campus YWCAs and YMCAs who first met at the YM/YWCA Southern Regional Christian Conference at Berea College in Kentucky during the summer of 1948. This was the first truly integrated conference of the YM/YWCA in the South since the Student YMCA voted at their meeting in December 1947 to sponsor only integrated conferences.[71] At the conference, Peoples called together a "Mississippi caucus," and the group resolved to stay in contact and work together when they returned home. Like other YMCA delegates, Peoples wrote an article for the Jackson State campus paper about this first formally integrated YM/YWCA conference.[72] But the article was never published; the administration redacted it because, as he remembers, "it could not be publicized that I had attended this interracial meeting because of the segregationist political atmosphere of the state."[73] Nevertheless, students and faculty sponsors from the three schools met at Jackson State the next year, eating in a dormitory lounge together because university officials at the segregated African American school

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70 John A Peoples, *To Survive and Thrive: The Quest for a True University* (Jackson, MS: Town Square Books, 1995).

71 See an account of this YMCA regional meeting held at Morehouse College in the "Integrating the YM/YWCA Southern Regional Conference" section of this chapter.

72 A YMCA delegate from Morehouse College, however, did publish an account of the integrated Y meeting at Berea College, which he called a "historical moment in the history of the Southern region." Lorenzo Gunn, "Integrated Southern Area YMCA, YWCA Conference Held at Berea," *Maroon Tiger* (Atlanta, GA, n.d.).

73 John A. Peoples, "Toward a New Era of Freedom," in *American Students Organize: Founding the National Student Association After World War Ii: An Anthology and Sourcebook*, by Eugene G. Schwartz and United States National Student Association (Westport, CT: American Council on Education/Praeger, 2006), 425.

would not allow them to eat together in the cafeteria. Peoples recalls that the "YWCA sponsors were also trying to be a little more liberal," and the group met together for several years, pledging "to work in our state for racial justice through education."[74] The reach of the Student YM/YWCA lasted long after the Mississippi youths left their campus communities, however, as several of this group chose careers in the state that fostered racial reconciliation.[75]

CONCLUSION

The message of Christian brotherhood and international unity espoused by the YWCA provided a vital interpretive framework for youth who came of age in the postwar South. Because of the expressly democratic structure and mission of the YWCA, Southern youth were able to view the Y's platform of racial equality not as a threat, but as a model to work towards in their daily lives. The "step by step" approach to human relations charted by the Y provided a blueprint for interaction among youths who had little experience relating to one another. Human relations cast the problem of racial inequality in global terms, but it prescribed mutual understanding among individuals as a form of redress. Students viewed segregation not just as a regional or racial issue, but a problem of human inequality, anathema to both their religious faith and belief in democracy.

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74 Ibid.

75 Peoples would leave a lucrative job in a racially integrated community in Gary, Indiana return to with his family to Mississippi in the mid-1960s to fulfill this mission to work for racial justice. He notes that "Two of these white students eventually became clergymen in the state, and another became a medical social worker." Peoples, *To Survive and Thrive*.

Chapter 5: "Human Relations" and the Freedom Movement: The NSA Southern Student Human Relations Project, 1958-1968

> Whatever else the three-week seminar may have accomplished, it had taken the concept of integration out of the realm of the theoretical and demonstrated it at work in the real world. And all of us, black, and white, were shaken by the realization that, at base, despite all that we had been taught and led to believe, we wanted the same things and were not much different.
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> -D'Army Bailey[1]

The mention of Southern student activism evokes the iconic image of four courageous students sitting stoically at a Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina in February 1960. A wave of student-initiated demonstrations swept through the South in the months that followed. The press interpreted the student sit-ins in the spring of 1960 as the arrival of a new generation, no longer "silent" or "uncommitted," but dedicated to dismantling America's version of racial apartheid. Yet while direct action represented a history-altering break with past practice, the sit-ins were less a revolutionary rupture than a tactical evolution within a broader history of youth activism against racial inequality in the South. Among the antecedents to the sit-ins was the study and practice of human relations, an oft overlooked means by which many Southern students, both black and white, joined the freedom struggle.

This chapter considers the influence of the human relations tradition to the freedom movement by focusing on the National Student Association's (NSA) "Southern Student Human Relations Project," known informally as the "Southern Project," which operated from 1958 to 1968. The Southern Project's primary initiative was an annual, three-to-four week summer human relations seminar bringing white and black Southern

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[1]Bailey and Easson, *The Education of a Black Radical*, 72.

students together in shared study at a college campus outside of the South, where interracial gatherings were legal. Organizers typically selected less than 20 participants each year, and matriculated approximately 150 participants during the Seminar's active years between 1958 and 1965.[2] The safe intellectual and emotional environment allowed participants to engage with the history and mechanics of Southern segregation, and better understand their roles within it. Human relations seminars opened up new avenues for criticism of segregation, and suggested new hope for an integrated society. Many participants formed their first cross-racial friendships at these gatherings. Upon returning to their home campuses, many built local networks to support civil rights activism throughout the South. Some Southern Project alumni later became leaders in the Freedom Movement, including Charles McDew, Casey Hayden, Joan Browning, D'Army Bailey, Bob Zellner, and Constance Curry, the Southern Project's director.

HUMAN RELATIONS IN PERSPECTIVE

Southern students often used the term "human relations" as code for race relations in the 1940s and 1950s when segregation was enforced by rule of law. By and large, however, scholars have not yet examined the concept's influence on the development of mid-twentieth century racial progressivism. This oversight is not entirely surprising. The enforcers of the racial caste system of the early postwar South were both

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2 Fourteen students attended each of the first two Seminars organized by Ray Farabee. Under Connie Curry's direction from 1960 to 1963, the Seminars admitted between sixteen and twenty students each summer. When Hayes Mizelle took over the directorship in 1964, he changed the curriculum and began to increase the number of participants. Thirty students participated in 1965, making it both the largest -- and final -- year of the SSHRS.

powerful and dangerous, and the term's ambiguity made it easier to escape their notice. Once the Freedom Movement emerged into the open in the 1960s, and "putting your body on the line" had become the true measure of devotion to the cause of equality, some dismissed the human relations tradition as "all talk." Yet in both concept and practice, human relations helped to provide an intellectual and moral foundation for growing student opposition to racial oppression. Programs such as the Southern Project foreshadowed the development of a broad and inclusive freedom movement, predicated on the universalism of human worth and dignity.

The concept of human relations first emerged in the 1930s and gained popular currency after World War II, as American educators and social psychologists advanced the idea that community leaders, trained in the latest social scientific theories, could become "change agents" for a more democratic society. Many saw it as a means to thwart the impulse toward authoritarianism by fostering tolerance and empathy for minority populations, and teaching peaceful methods of conflict resolution. As both an academic field of inquiry and a thoroughly interpersonal endeavor, human relations emphasized the potential of interpersonal contact to alter societal dynamics.[3] Combining theory with social action, the concept seemed a natural vehicle for challenging the Southern color line.

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3 As mentioned in the previous chapter, the concept of human relations eventually gained popularity with business management trainers for the purpose of achieving greater organizational effectiveness, but in the 1940s and 1950s, human relations concerns translated into a social activist orientation. Laura Kim Lee, "Changing Selves, Changing Society: Human Relations Experts and the Invention of T Groups, Sensitivity Training, and Encounter in the United States, 1938-1980" (University of California at Los Angeles, 2002).

Indeed, by the 1950s, both secular and religious progressive organizations had recognized human relations as a weapon against segregation. The American Council on Education, the National Conference of Christians and Jews, and the Atlanta-based Southern Regional Council, funded academic and community studies of human relations. Notices advertising human relations meetings became increasingly common in 1950's campus newspapers, and it was a frequent topic of formal discussion at University Young Men's and Women's Christian Associations (YM/YWCA), as well as the National Student Association (NSA), a national confederation of over 300 student governments. As both an ethos and a practical concept, human relations fit comfortably within the established rubrics of these progressive organizations. In the segregated South, the student YM/YWCA and the NSA created what historian Sara Evans terms "free spaces:" rare environments where blacks and whites could interact as equals.[4] Students from across the country met at NSA conferences and regional meetings to discuss matters of interest to American students, including foreign and domestic policy. Drawing as well upon the emergent rhetoric of human rights, NSA forged campus ties with schools and students around the world, while also sharpening its critique of segregation in the South.

CREATING THE SOUTHERN STUDENT HUMAN RELATIONS SEMINAR

In the fall of 1957, Ray Farabee, a law student at the University of Texas at Austin (UT), became the president of NSA, the nation's largest collegiate representative body. A veteran NSA member, the new president faced numerous pressing challenges that tested his considerable political skills, including negotiating the controversial issue of

4 Evans and Boyte, *Free Spaces*.

desegregation in higher education without alienating Southern member universities.[5] The NSA's national and regional meetings had been desegregated since the organization's founding in 1947. Since that time, NSA had adopted a broad, internationalist perspective that often conflicted with the nation's increasingly rigid Cold War approach to world politics. NSA also organized a series of prestigious, annual international summer seminars, convening small numbers of exceptional American and international students for nine weeks of study, discussion, sports, shared housing, and cultural events. Their purpose was to build a social network of future world leaders, whose personal relationships would in turn help to foster and sustain global cooperation and peace. Indeed, many alumni later became national and international leaders.[6] Attendees included Kofi Annan and other youth who were presumed to be their nation's future leaders. Farabee hoped that the cooperative model pioneered by the NSA's international seminars might be adapted to encourage similar interaction between Southern white and black students, whose contact with each other remained severely circumscribed in their home communities.

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5 A native Texan from Wichita Falls, Farabee's experience in youth organizations extended back to his high school years, when he had helped organize interracial regional "High-Y" YMCA conferences for high school-aged youth. At college, he quickly became a leader and active participant at the University of Texas YM/YWCA, which was integrated by national policy and had a long tradition of interracial gatherings and discussions on the issues of justice and peace.

6 We now know that the CIA covertly funded this seminar, and documents from the NSA archives in Wisconsin reveal that some American participants were instructed to record observations of the personal characteristics, mannerisms, and preferences of international student leaders for CIA files. *United States Student Association Records*, Wisconsin Historical Society, University of Wisconsin at Madison. For more on the NSA-CIA connection, see Paget, "From Stockholm to Leiden: The CIA's Role in the Formation of the International Student Conference"; Johnston, "The United States National Student Association."

Southern youth, Farabee believed, were "more open-minded," and "less bound by economic or other institutional factors" than were their parents.[7] In keeping with the prevailing assumptions of human relations, he felt confident that education and meaningful interaction across the color line would empower student leaders to challenge segregation.[8] To make his vision a reality, Farabee secured a two-year grant from the Marshall Field Foundation to host the Southern Student Human Relations Seminar (SSHRS). The SSHRS sought the participation of moderate and liberal-minded white and black Southern student leaders for a three-week course of intensive study and discussion of human relations in their home region. The project's purposely anodyne title contained no reference to race relations, reflecting Farabee's belief that it was more likely to attract mainstream "Southern student leader types" if it did not "sound too radical."[9]

Notwithstanding its fairly liberal national leadership, NSA had thus far transcended ideological division among its members by focusing primarily on issues of academic freedom and student representation. Yet charges of radicalism were nothing new for NSA. As earlier chapters recount, pitched affiliation battles took place routinely on Southern campuses, as conservatives condemned the organization's comparatively

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7 Ray Farabee interview with the author, September 9, 2008, Austin, TX, taped, in author's possession.

8 Southern student leaders at national NSA congresses had called for a regional project of this type for several years. Ray Farabee to Dear Friends, April 13, 1959, box 7, folder "Curriculum and Program,1959," The Records of the United States National Student Association Southern Project, King Center Archives, Atlanta, Georgia. (Hereafter, cited as "Southern Project Papers.")

9 Ray Farabee interview with the author, September 9, 2008, Austin, TX, taped, in author's possession.

liberal stances on race, federal education funding, and internationalism.[10] Nevertheless, the majority of NSA member schools fell somewhere in the middle of the political spectrum, and left and right-leaning students mixed easily at its annual conventions throughout the late 1940s and early 1950s. Some Southerners, although sympathetic to the aims of the nascent freedom movement, worried that NSA's intervention in the national debate over civil rights risked factionalizing the organization and might prompt southern schools to disaffiliate en masse. Subsequent events proved this fear to be somewhat unfounded. As historian Angus Johnston notes, "in fact Southern white membership fell by only two schools – from 90 to 88 – between 1959 and 1963," and attendance at NSA conferences increased more swiftly during these years than in any period since the NSA's founding in 1947. [11]

Despite the fear of alienating Southern membership, the inaugural SSHRS took place during the summer of 1958 at Ohio State University, beyond the reach of the Southern color line. Farabee had scheduled the Seminar to coincide with NSA's annual national convention, held that year at Ohio Wesleyan.[12] With help from an adult advisory committee of progressive Southern clergyman, scholars, journalists, and educators, Farabee planned a three-week Seminar targeting moderate Southern students. He

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10 See Chapter One for a description of affiliation battles at the University of Texas at Austin.

11 Johnston, "The United States National Student Association," 310–311.

12 In 1958 and 1959 the first two weeks were comprised of the core curriculum, after which Seminar participants attended the NSA National Convention, while continuing to meet as a group. From 1959 to 1964, the Seminar took place immediately preceding the national convention (always held on a midwestern college campus) and NSA encouraged Seminar participants to stay and attend the convention afterwards.

selected white and black participants more on the basis of their leadership potential than on their beliefs about human relations or segregation. Farabee "neither expected nor hoped" that every participant would "favor integration."[13] Seminar applicants held different beliefs about human relations, but expressed a universal interest in learning more about segregation and the history of race relations in the South.[14]

One applicant from Mississippi wrote that "change in the hearts of the South" was necessary in order "to form a more liberal and tolerant viewpoint concerning Negro Americans, as well as other persecuted and mistreated races of the world."[15] In placing the issue of racial justice into an international context, she echoed the sentiments of many SSHRS applicants. Others expressed personal shame about specific, high profile racial incidents in the South, such as the mob action to prevent Autherine Lucy from becoming the first African American to attend the University of Alabama in 1956.[16]

Fourteen Southern students attended each of the first two seminars, chosen from a mix of schools that were integrated, segregated, and likely to integrate in the future.[17] The SSHRS curriculum addressed the history of Southern race relations with a rigor and accuracy that likely would have scandalized many white southerners of the era. To

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13 Ray Farabee, "Letter to Dear Friends," April 13, 1959, box 7, folder "Curriculum and Program, 1959," *Southern Project Papers*.

14 Box 8, folder "1959 Seminar Participants," *Southern Project Papers*.

15 Ibid.

16 Ray Farabee interview with the author, September 9, 2008, Austin, Texas, taped, in author's possession.

17 Warren Ashby, "Statement to Dean's Conference on SSHRS & Values," box 6, folder "11-Correspondence, Advisors, Speakers, Response Persons, 1958," *Southern Project Papers.*

prepare, the students read books and articles on the origins and evolution of racial oppression in the South, particularly in churches and schools. The reading list included Harry Ashmore's *An Epitaph for Dixie* and *With All Deliberate Speed*, edited by Don Shoemaker, as well as White Citizen's Council and other segregationist tracts. Subsequent seminars would read C. Vann Woodward's *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, Charles Grier Seller's *The Southerner as American*, and *Mississippi, the Closed Society* by James Silver. Participants also maintained a reading load of between 100-180 pages of material per night during the Seminar, including case studies of desegregation at colleges and universities, and segregationist tracts distributed by the white supremacist Citizen's Council.[18] These hours of study imparted a new sense of intellectual confidence to Seminar participants, who, as one organizer remarked, aimed to "realistically work with problems which their seniors are not acknowledging."[19]

Faculty advisor Warren Ashby, a professor of ethics and philosophy at the Woman's College in Greensboro, North Carolina, gave the opening address at both the 1958 and 1959 Seminars. In his talks, Ashby connected Southern racial dynamics to the new international pressures and responsibilities of the United States.[20] Other notable speakers at the 1958 and 1959 Seminars included Ambassador to the United Nations Frank Graham, former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, economist Vivienne Henderson,

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18 Ray Farabee, "Report: Southern Student Human Relations Seminar, August 3-29, 1958," box 6, folder "Background Information, Prospectus, Curriculum, 1958," *Southern Project Papers.*

19 Ibid.

20 Ashby was also chairman of the American Friends Service Commission College Committee in the Southeastern Region. Ibid., and box 8, folder "Report to the Field Foundation, 1959," *Southern Project Papers*.

author Harry Ashmore, along with Dorothy Tilly and Frederic Routh of the Southern Regional Council.[21] Participants grappled with sociology, physiology, and history, viewed relevant films, engaged in role-playing exercises, and wrote evaluation papers on themselves and their communities with respect to racial issues. Many also learned for the first time about earlier efforts to change Southern attitudes on race; a proud tradition of progressive action of which they were now a part.

The SSHRS cultivated an atmosphere of demanding, collaborative study, which in turn encouraged Seminar participants to re-examine their own racial experiences and attitudes. They socialized together in integrated dormitories, cafeterias, student unions and libraries. Seminar discussions often transformed into informal bull sessions running "late into the night," according to faculty advisor Ashby.[22] For most of the students, the experience shattered preconceived stereotypes. Farabee himself was not immune to these leaping shifts of paradigm. During the final week of the 1958 Seminar (which overlapped with the NSA Congress), he attempted to explain to Jan Porter, the black student body president of the University of Chicago, his lingering unease about the effects of interracial marriage on children. "For her children," Porter replied, "it would make no difference; they were going to be black one way or another." The truth of

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21 "Report: Southern Student Human Relations Seminar, August 3-29, 1958," box 6, folder "Report, 1958," and box 8, folder "Report to the Field Foundation, 1959," *Southern Project Papers.*

22 Warren Ashby, "Interim Report: August 15, 1959, Southern Students Human Relations Seminar," box 6, folder "Correspondence, Advisors, Speakers, Response Persons, 1958," *Southern Project Papers*.

Porter's remark struck Farabee with tremendous emotional force, such that he could recall that moment, in all its clarity and power, fifty years later.[23]

Participants varied in their assessments of the seminar experience, but all claimed that it had deeply influenced their perspective on desegregation in the South. A few themes emerged in the evaluations they wrote months thereafter. Many wrote that the seminar was one of the most meaningful experiences of their lives. They identified the personal interaction between whites and blacks, particularly in the areas of recreation, housing, and eating, as crucial. Anne Owens wrote that through these interactions, "I saw aspects of the problem that I could have never seen from the view of a white Southern student in Little Rock, Arkansas." She realized early in the seminar "how important the solving of this problem is to America as a world power," but believed the greatest value of the seminar was the personal shift in perspective it engendered in her.[24] Gloria Haithman, the only African American woman at the 1958 seminar, described it in similar terms. She also felt that "the value of eating and rooming together could not be overemphasized," as it provided practical application to the intellectual ideas from discussion sessions. Only two students, both white males, dissented somewhat from this view. Both evaluated the 1958 program positively overall, but thought that organizers should have notified students that dorm space would be integrated, and given them the

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23 Ray Farabee interview with the author, September 9, 2008, Austin, TX, taped, in author's possession.

24 Owens wrote that the SSHRS helped her "to see the problem in its true perspective, not distorted to such a great degree by my background and upbringing." Anne Owens, Untitled [Seminar Evaluation], box 6, folder "Evaluations, 1958," *Southern Project Papers*.

right to choose.[25] One of these students concluded that "[c]areful plans should be made to insure against this ever becoming an 'integration' seminar." This student from segregated Florida State University reasoned that Southern student leaders were interested in "a peaceful transition of desegregation," but he felt that too much moralizing would prove counterproductive.[26] He advised that the "emotional make up" of participants and campus communities should be taken into account. "Do not expect too much out of a person in three or four weeks," he said. "This is a deep rooted concept. Most of the dividends of the seminar will appear some time later than the actual meeting."[27] Thus, even those who were not comfortable with the idea of immediate integration seemed open to change, albeit gradual.

Several months after the seminar, however, gradualists were in the minority. Maryville College student Dan Ellis felt that "the most important subject covered was the 'quiet revolution,' the miracle of college integration." He voiced a more common

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25 John Hafner, a white student from Spring Hill College in Mobile, AL, wrote, "I honestly believe that it was unfair for us to come to the Seminar completely unprepared for these arrangements." He felt that interracial recreation and eating was an important aspect of the experience, but was "very much surprised" to find that the housing was integrated. He did not protest, he said, because he knew it would be "extremely detrimental to the entire Seminar." But he wrote, "I am sure that the outcome would have been just as good if the Negros had roomed with the Negros [sic] and the whites had roomed together. Perhaps I'm overemphasizing this but it had a great effect on me and I definitely think the participants should realize the situation before they arrive and be able to state their preference." John Hafner, "Evaluation of Southern Students Human Relations Seminar," box 6, folder "Evaluations, 1958," *Southern Project Papers*.

26 Florida State accepted its first black undergraduates in 1962.

27 Moore recommended a follow-up of some sort after the seminar, if not in person, then in writing. Art Moore, "Evaluation of the Southern Student Human Relations Seminar," September 1, 1958, box 6, folder "Evaluations, 1958," *Southern Project Papers.*

viewpoint that the seminar should cover more "concrete programming," "what to do with what we learned upon returning to the campus," and "techniques of change."[28] Frank Elkins, a white student from the University of North Carolina similarly advised a greater focus on the "practical application of principles learned at the seminar (i.e. the actual work that students can do in human relations on the local scale."[29] African American attendees agreed on this principle as well. University of Texas student Anthony Henry said that the case studies of actual situations of desegregation at universities were especially useful, as he viewed the "training of Southern leaders" as the most important purpose of the seminar.[30] But most of the black attendees criticized the seminar for its dearth of African American resource material and personnel. Dillard University student Earl White recommended more discussion of "strategies and techniques," and felt strongly that the seminar should incorporate material relating to "the role that Negro colleges and universities have played in desegregation in higher education."[31] J. Charles

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28 Maryville College was desegregated in 1958, and had an unusual history in that it was interracial from its founding in the 19th century. The state of Tennessee forced it to segregate in 1901, at which time it transferred a portion of its endowment to create an all-black "sister school." It immediately desegregated after the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. Dan Ellis, "SSHRS Evaluation," box 6, folder "Evaluations, 1958," *Southern Project Papers*.

29 Frank Elkins, "SSHRS Evaluation," box 6, folder "Evaluations, 1958," *Southern Project Papers*.

30 Anthony Henry, "Southern Student Human Relations Seminar Evaluation," box 6, folder "Evaluations, 1958," *Southern Project Papers*.

31 White wrote that the Seminar "has shown me where I was fallacious in some of my approaches to the South's problems. It has further inspired me to take what I have gained back to my school and begin a realistic and tacit approach to the problems." Earl White, "An Evaluation of the Southern Students' Human Relations Seminar, box 6, folder "Evaluations, 1958," *Southern Project Papers*.

Jones, who would become a leader of the 1960 sit-ins in Charlotte, North Carolina, agreed that the seminar needed to highlight "the negro and his actions in the process of desegregation," especially those efforts at black colleges.[32] He also strongly objected to another seminar participant's description of the NAACP as a "radical group."[33] Gloria Haithman recommended more historical material on African Americans in the twentieth century, and advised that more women and African Americans serve as consultants.[34]

Flaws notwithstanding, the seminars allowed whites and blacks to speak to each other directly, and with unprecedented frankness, about the personal impacts of segregation. Most alumni wrote of gaining a better understanding of themselves, their peers, and how segregation affected whites and blacks differently. In his evaluation of the experience, a black student from Virginia reported feeling "less self-conscious in an

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32 Jones was a senior at historically black Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte, NC. In 1958 he would join black and white students at a Quaker-run training program on non-violent social change at Berea College in Berea, KY. Charles Jones, "Evaluation of SSHRS," box 6, folder "Evaluations, 1958," *Southern Project Papers*.

33 Jones wrote, "Someone succeeded in describing the NAACP as a subversive organization working outside of the law as an extremist group to create and promote violence and complete chaos. This I think is a horrible mis-representation of the NAACP and its functions were studied very little in the seminar." Charles Jones, "Evaluation of SSHRS," box 6, folder "Evaluations, 1958," *Southern Project Papers*.

34 Haithman wrote, "It might be a good idea to have a Negro who is in the 'power structure' in a large Negro community to speak to the seminar. I hope the seminar project will be continued until the problem has been resolved and the trying age of transition is over." Gloria Haithman, "Evaluation of the 1958 Southern Students Human Relations Seminar," box 6, folder "Evaluations, 1958," *Southern Project Papers.*

inter-racial group" a few months after the 1958 Seminar.[35] One white student from the same cohort wrote that, while he had considered himself an integrationist prior to the Seminar, he now recognized having been "to a great degree on the Southern defensive."[36]

"Defensive" was probably an apt description of many Southern college students in the late 1950s, and indeed, personal revelation was quite common among Seminar participants. Socially conditioned to accept segregation uncritically, both black and white participants often confronted deeply held feelings and beliefs of which they had previously not been aware. A white student from Little Rock, for example, acknowledged a change in his attitude toward segregation. "Living and working and sharing" with black students, he wrote, had convinced him that he had to be part of the "changes to come" in the South. He realized "that my own rights as an individual will not be fully secured" until all Americans enjoy equal rights.[37] Others expressed regret that the seminar had not lasted longer. These reports confirmed precisely the kinds of insights that Farabee and the other organizers had envisioned prior to organizing the first SSHRS.

Seminar alumni also sent periodic updates on their activities, progress, and challenges to NSA headquarters. Anthony "Tony" Henry, a leader in both the University YMCA and NSA and one of the first African Americans to enroll as an undergraduate at the University of Texas, founded an interracial human relations student group after

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35 "The 1958 Southern Student Human Relations Seminar Final Evaluation, April 1959," box 11, folder "Evaluations, 1958," *Southern Project Papers*.

36 Bob Alexander, "Evaluation," box 7, folder "Evaluations I, 1959," *Southern Project Papers*.

37 "The 1958 Southern Student Human Relations Seminar Final Evaluation, April 1959," box 11, folder "Evaluations, 1958," *Southern Project Papers*.

returning from the 1958 SSHRS.[38] With a large university and progressive faith community, Austin seemed particularly open to changing its racial status quo in the late 1950s.[39] At Henry's urging, several student groups organized a boycott of segregated campus restaurants.[40] After several low-key "sit-downs" at the popular Night Hawk diner, owner Harry Aiken agreed to desegregate his establishment, and to urge other restaurants to do the same.[41] Other SSHRS alumni also reported persuading local businesses to desegregate, organizing weekly campus discussion groups, and convincing their school administrators to relax racially restrictive dormitory policies. [42] Nine months after the 1958 seminar, nine out of the fourteen attendees had sent back detailed accounts of similar efforts at their home campuses.[43] NSA distributed this information, along with

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38 "List of Participants, Southern Student Human Relations Seminar, August 3-29, 1958." box 6, folder "Background Information, Prospectus, Curriculum, 1958," *Southern Project Papers.*

39 Besides the University YM/YWCA, the Christian Faith and Life Community at UT was important in providing a space where students were encouraged to put their religious and philosophical understandings into practice, living in interracial dormitory space. See Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity*.

40 Casey Hayden phone interview with the author, September 10, 2008, taped, in author's possession.

41 Campus-area restaurants in Austin desegregated with little controversy during the 1958-1959 school year. Robert Hardgrave, Jr., "Burden of the Past: Race at UT in the 1950s," *Daily Texan* (Austin, TX, April 9, 1996).

42 These students attended Hampton Institute in Virginia, Dillard University in New Orleans, and Women's College in Greensboro, NC. "The 1958 Southern Student Human Relations Seminar Final Evaluation, April 1959," box 11, folder "Evaluations, 1958," *Southern Project Papers*.

43 The alumni of the 1958 seminar were very active on their campuses: three served as student body presidents the following year, at least six more worked in their student governance associations, and one became a campus newspaper editor and co-chair of a human relations committee; "1958 Southern Student Human

a growing compendium of "Action Reports," to other students around the country who wished to attempt similar human relations and desegregation projects.[44]

The SSHRS evolved considerably in its first two years. In response to complaints about the overrepresentation of white males at the inaugural 1958 Seminar, the 1959 version sought a more equal gender and racial balance. Seminar directors also added African American literature and speakers to the Seminar. Farabee refined the Seminar's purpose and objectives to reflect the lessons learned in 1958 and 1959, including jettisoning his early focus on racial moderates in preference for "educated Southern youth with liberal racial ideas," and placing greater emphasis on "action" and "techniques" of "effective leadership."[45]

Farabee's selection of a successor demonstrated the Seminar's shift toward a more activist-oriented approach. Capitalizing on the early success of the Southern Student Human Relations Seminars, the NSA secured funding from the Field Foundation in 1960 to expand the annual Seminar into a year round program with a full time director, known as the "Southern Project." NSA located its Southern Project headquarters in Atlanta, GA, and hired Constance Curry, a charismatic twenty-three-year-old as its first director. A native North Carolinian, Curry had been a prominent undergraduate student leader and NSA member at Agnes Scott College in Decatur, Georgia, and had organized

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Relations Seminar Final Evaluation, April 1959," box 6, folder "Evaluations, 1958," *Southern Project Papers*.

44 "Student Participation In College Desegregation," box 8, folder "Action Reports, 1959," *Southern Project Papers*.

45 "Report of the USNSA Second Southern Student Human Relations Seminar," University of Illinois, 9 August-3 September 1959, box 8, folder "Report to the Field Foundation," *Southern Project Papers*.

interracial meetings in the South as chair of NSA's "Great Southern" region in 1953.[46] Curry's selection accelerated the Southern Project's transformation into a locus of student collaboration and organizing against segregation.

"THE SOUTHERN PROJECT" AND THE SIT-INS

In February 1960, only a month after Curry began leading the Southern Project, the Woolworth's sit-in in Greensboro dramatically introduced the nation to student direct action. Though not the first of its kind, the sit-in demonstrations by four North Carolina A&T freshmen captured the attention of the national press as prior similar actions had not, and triggered an unprecedented groundswell of student-led civil disobedience across the South. Ella Baker, a skilled organizer and a firm believer in grassroots leadership, recognized the sit-ins as an organizing opportunity and convened in Raleigh, NC, for an Easter weekend conference at Shaw University in April of 1960. Established civil rights groups, including SCLC and CORE, hoped to incorporate the students into auxiliary branches of their organizations. But Baker zealously defended the autonomy of the emerging student movement, encouraging the most dedicated among them, including

46 As NSA chairperson of the Great Southern region, Curry organized a conference at the only location in Atlanta that would permit an integrated meeting -- the Luckie Street YMCA. Curry remembered "the moment when the consequences of racial segregation first hit me personally was lunch hour at that Saturday meeting....When noon came, the black delegates, some of whom were my friends from the national congresses, walked down the steps of the Y and headed toward Auburn Avenue to the black restaurants. The rest of us walked down the steps and headed in the other direction. I realized then that segregation took away *my* personal freedom as surely as if I were bound by invisible chains." Constance Curry, "Wild Geese to the Past," in *Deep in Our Hearts: Nine White Women in the Freedom Movement*, ed. Constance Curry (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2000), 15.

Julian Bond, Lonnie King, and Marion Barry to form their own organization. They did so, creating the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). Though it began at the margins, SNCC quickly became the intellectual and emotional heart of the civil rights movement in the South, infusing it with the ideals of nonviolence and democratic equality.[47]

The link between SNCC and NSA's Southern Project was both immediate and strong. Curry looked to Baker as a mentor, as well as a conduit to other human relations workers in the region. The two women traveled together from Atlanta to the formative Raleigh student conference. When SNCC named Baker and Curry as official advisors, along with Harry Belafonte, Curry devoted a portion of the Southern Project's funds and resources to launching the new organization. According to Julian Bond, Curry was instrumental in connecting SNCC with NSA's extensive campus network, providing fertile ground for both fund-raising and recruiting.[48]

Yet while the sit-ins transformed the political environment on many campuses, they also generated considerable confusion among racially liberal Southern students. The SSHRS seminars of the late 1950s had emphasized resolving racial issues through non-coercive and legal means, as reflected in UT student Tony Henry's cautious approach to restaurant desegregation in Austin. Given its propensity to inflame, most human relations

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47 See Hogan, *Many Minds, One Heart*.

48 Curry gave Julian Bond a key to the Southern Project office, where he was able to mimeograph SNCC newsletters and memos to other student organizations. According to Bond, Curry "was a bridge between the overwhelming number of black sit-in students and white students who were predisposed to join with us." Just as importantly, she "publicized the sit-in movement within the NSA network, interpreted it, and created an audience for us that might not have been there." Curry, "Wild Geese to the Past," 23–24.

practitioners regarded direct action and protest as a last resort. The sit-ins were tactically at odds with this approach, leaving many progressive-minded students uncertain of how best to act in accordance with their beliefs. This was evident in the applications for the Southern Project Seminars going forward, which spiked sharply in the wake of the sit-ins. The Seminars themselves also changed considerably from year to year, in an attempt to keep pace with swiftly changing patterns of Southern student activism.

From 1960 to 1964, Connie Curry consulted with Will Campbell, a progressive white Baptist minister, on programming and selection of participants for the Seminars.[49] They chose students who seemed most willing to challenge segregation in their local communities. The purpose of the seminars remained largely unchanged; to provide "interpretive background" and "allow interracial, interpersonal experience" so that participants might view themselves as "citizens of the nation and the world;" unbound by regional custom.[50]

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49 Will Campbell served as campus chaplain at the University of Mississippi from 1954 to 1956, where he faced hostility and death threats for his support of integration. He was the only white person present at the founding of the Southern Christian Leadership Council in 1957, and was one of two white ministers who escorted the Little Rock Nine through white mobs as they made their way to enroll at Little Rock High School in 1957. (He actually knew many of the guardsmen because he served as chaplain to the Tennessee National Guard, and the two states drilled together). He served as an unofficial "human relations advisor" to the Nashville community, acting as eyes and ears for James Lawson during the student demonstrations who, as a white minister, served as an official witness and behind-the-scenes intermediary with the Nashville police, ascertaining which youth had been arrested and where they were held. Will D. Campbell and Richard C. Goode, *Crashing the Idols: The Vocation of Will D. Campbell (and Any Other Christian for That Matter)* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2010), 19–20.

50 "United States National Student Association Proposal for the Renewal of the Southern Student Human Relations Project," box 1, folder "Advisory Committee - Jan.1962," *Southern Project Papers*.

Now that there was a more defined student movement to join, students sought not just social knowledge, but practical instruction on how to combat segregation and racial prejudice. In her 1960 Southern Project application, Casey Hayden (*nee* Sandra Cason) expressed a desire to learn about the "power structures" behind segregation, and the "possibilities of action in existing channels, and…new channels, both on campus and off." She wrote that she hoped to better understand the "social, economic, and political background of the present problems and the resulting fear and reaction" from whites and blacks to "the areas of integration and human rights."[51] Hayden displayed a keen interest in human relations but wanted a greater perspective of the changing social environment in the South. Along with other post-Greensboro Seminar participants such as Chuck McDew, Bob Zellner and Joan Browning, Hayden was qualitatively different from applicants in the Seminar's earlier years. As a student and YWCA leader at the University of Texas at Austin, she had already participated in direct actions to oppose segregation.

In contrast to the primarily introspective nature of earlier Seminars, from 1960 to 1963 they included concrete objectives and tactics of civil rights activism. After the 1960 Seminar, consultant Will Campbell recommended that the Southern Project waste no time trying "to 'convert' the conservatives." A moderate, "leadership training" approach,

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51 From Sandra Cason's application to the Southern Project., Folder: Cason, Sandra, 1960, "Reasons for My Interest in NSA Human Relations Seminar." Personal files of Project Director, Connstance Curry, Atlanta, Georgia, copy in possession of the author.

Campbell warned, might just as easily "result in developing some very fine leaders for the white resistors and their movements."[52]

HUMAN RELATIONS IN PRACTICE

Connie Curry's sympathies lay with Hayden and the other seminar participants who were eager to apply human relations techniques to the problem of race. As director of the Southern Project, Curry incorporated more specific programming on methods of action into the 1960 seminar curriculum, while retaining its original emphasis on study, fellowship, and personal reflection. Reverend James Lawson spoke to the 1960 participants on the philosophy behind nonviolent resistance, and led a role-playing exercise on civil disobedience. Valerie Brown, a white student from segregated Texas Christian University, wrote that the experience of being ridiculed, pushed, and called names while role-playing an African American sit-in activist brought her face-to-face with the horrifying "realization of what it means to be denied the right to be a person."[53]

As facilitators, Curry and Campbell challenged Seminar participants to think in broader terms about human relations in the South, and to cultivate greater respect for one another. Only in such an environment could they cease "wearing masks" of politeness,

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52 Will D. Campbell, "Report on the Seminar," box 1, folder "Advisory Committee, January 1961," *Southern Project Papers*.

53 Brown wrote, "Imagine being burned on the back of the neck with a cigarette or having someone spit in your face and not even having a desire to strike back! And why – how are they able to attain this? In their training this becomes a part of them and they are able to look at you and say, 'These people are sick. I couldn't strike a sick man. I want to heal him.'" Valerie Brown, "Seminar Report," September 14, 1960, box 9, folder "1960 Third Seminar Applications – Accepted," *Southern Project Papers*.

and honestly confront the harsh truths of racial injustice. Recognition of one another's common humanity, Campbell often told participants, signaled the start of civilization and the symbolic first act of human relations. The same impulse lay at the heart of student responses to racial discrimination. Justice followed knowledge and understanding. There was not just "one way," Campbell argued, to oppose segregation. "Some," he said, "will march in picket lines and face the jeers of neighbors and the jails of peers. Some will seek and find other ways."[54]

At its most powerful, the Seminar offered participants a glimpse of what could be. The spontaneous development of personal bonds between the students themselves played a key role in creating this remarkable dynamic. In the 1960 Seminar, a relationship sprang up between Valerie Brown and Chuck McDew, an African American undergraduate and sit-in leader from South Carolina State College. Most Seminar participants had never witnessed an interracial romance. The possibility and natural development of Brown and McDew's courtship revealed to the Seminar's participants how profoundly artificial the Jim Crow barriers were in separating black from white.[55]

A few months after the 1960 Seminar, McDew was arrested for sitting-in at a lunch counter. He wrote Brown a letter from jail, describing for her the sights and sounds of the experience. Outside, he wrote, he could hear the voices of four hundred supportive students singing "We Shall Overcome," as well as the national anthem. "Why can't we be a world of blind men," he asked. "Then we would all be free and equal....Let me be

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54 Will D. Campbell, "The Display of a Feather," *New South* (January 1962): 7–8.

55 Casey Hayden was inspired to write a poem about this relationship just after the seminar, and both she and Connie Curry recall the impact of this union in their biographical essays in Curry, *Deep in Our Hearts*.

me, Charles Frederick McDew, man, student, lover of life. I don't want to be that nigger with no personality, no body, just a dark blob. I want to be me with my color that I love, with my eyes, my body, my dreams and aspirations."[56] McDew's letter painted the aims of the struggle in vivid and deeply personal terms, but it also expressed a universal hope for individual acceptance and freedom. Brown published it in TCU's campus paper in hopes that McDew's words might touch the consciences of white students who had no personal connection to the growing movement.

For other participants, the personal ties forged during the Seminar made it difficult to return to their segregated home communities, where such friendships remained impossible. Bob Catlett, a white attendee from Virginia Polytechnic Institute (now Virginia Tech), invited Chuck McDew to his campus shortly after the 1960 seminar to speak on his protest experiences. McDew recalls having to hide in a church basement after being "almost lynched" during his visit by a group of hostile VPI students.[57] His harrowing experience was a stark reminder that while it was one thing to meet interracially outside the South, interacting as equals below the Mason-Dixon Line still carried personal risk.

The 1960 national NSA convention in Minneapolis took place against a backdrop of rapid change on American college campuses. Knowing that the sit-ins would be a topic of fierce debate among the delegates, Connie Curry invited Casey Hayden, a participant in that year's Seminar, to speak to the NSA Congress in defense of the tactic. The night before Hayden spoke, a panel discussion featuring African American veterans

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56 Curry, "Wild Geese to the Past," 20.

57 Charles McDew conversation with the author, March 20, 2010, Columbia, SC, notes in author's possession.

of the sit-in demonstrations flared into a contentious exchange over the wisdom and effectiveness of direct action. Hayden participated in a panel that included one segregationist southerner and two liberal southerners, who nonetheless opposed the sit-ins. She took the podium immediately following a white male southerner's denunciation of the sit-ins as an abrogation of property rights. The organization seemed hopelessly split on how to respond to the historic developments.

Yet Hayden's words turned the debate. The sit-ins, she argued, were a direct and loving expression of the ideals of the nascent civil rights movement.[58] In their passive resistance to injustice, the sit-ins modeled a moral society, and represented the hope that "a just decision can become a reality in students walking and sitting and acting together."[59] To those who bridled at defying the law, Hayden replied that she did not view the law as "immutable, but rather as an agreed-upon pattern for relations between people. If the pattern is unjust . . . a person must at times choose to do the right rather than the legal."[60] She closed her address by recounting a famous exchange between Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau. "When Thoreau was jailed for refusing to pay taxes to a government which supported slavery, Emerson went to visit him," Hayden said. "'Henry David,' said Emerson, 'what are you doing in there?' Thoreau looked at him and replied, 'Ralph Waldo, what are you doing out there?'" After

58 Don Morrison, "White Coed Backs Sit-Ins, Gets Ovation," *Minneapolis Tribune*, August 1960.

59 Casey Hayden, "Onto Open Ground," in *Hands on the Freedom Plow: Personal Accounts by Women in SNCC*, ed. Faith S Holsaert (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 49–51.

60 Ibid.

pausing for effect, Hayden asked the audience, "What are you doing out there?"[61] The assembled students erupted in a standing ovation, and the NSA Congress voted overwhelmingly to endorse the sit-ins shortly thereafter.

Hayden was not the only Seminar participant to make an impact in the early 1960s. D'Army Bailey was already an active student leader at all-black Southern University in Louisiana when he participated in the Southern Project Seminar in 1961. As he later recalled, the seminar's intensive study of human relations, together with his first meaningful social interactions with white students, convinced him that racism was based on a fiction.[62] Amid discussions of racist and liberal viewpoints, scholarly racial analysis, and an "unusual sharing of emotions and motivations," Bailey "realized for the first time that there were whites who could honestly feel, relate to, and understand what it was like to be a Negro in America." For Bailey, the Seminar experience was a kind of nirvana, where whites and blacks achieved a level of trust and unity he never imagined impossible. "We had a lot of fun because racial antagonism was being neutralized as we gradually let our guards down." Socializing informally outside of the formal programming was a revelatory experience. "[W]e swam, played games, roasted hot dogs, and grilled hamburgers. At night we would sit around the campfire toasting marshmallows, singing 'Kum Bah Yah' to someone's accompanying guitar, listening to [the] banjo, or just watching the night sky, which seemed to have more stars than anywhere I had ever seen."[63]

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61 Ibid.

62 D'Army Bailey phone interview with the author, January 30, 2009, taped, in author's possession.

63 Bailey writes, "I realize that I say this at the risk of sounding ridiculous, that the experiences and feelings I describe may now seem incomprehensible. Perhaps

There was an astonishing freedom, Bailey recalls, in truly being oneself, away from the eyes and expectations of administrators, politicians, and parents. "We were a small microcosm to be sure," he recalls, "but we were trying, usually with success, to deal with each other as human beings."[64] The Seminar gave students the space to envision and even experience what they were fighting for. The fact that such an experience could be obtained merely by leaving the South emboldened participants to resist the seemingly arbitrary restrictions placed upon them in their home communities. Bailey would return to organize student protests at Southern University, for which he was subsequently expelled. Similarly, 1961 Seminar participant Walter Williams, an African American student at Jackson State College, became student body president but was kicked out of school when he spearheaded protests against Mississippi segregation laws.

Similarly, Bob Zellner, a native white Mississippian, had also been involved in the movement prior to attending the Seminar in 1961. He too remembers his experience at the Southern Project as "a watershed event." For Zellner, the seminar was a particularly vivid time of interracial fellowship, introducing him to powerful role models at a formative period in his life. He was particularly inspired by Will Campbell, whose actions and attitudes demonstrated, "in the same way that historian Vann Woodward taught...that one could be a good southerner and still oppose racial oppression and segregation."[65]

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it's like that line at the end of the old joke, 'you had to be there.'" Bailey and Easson, *The Education of a Black Radical*, 67–72.

64 Ibid., 69.

65 Bob Zellner and Constance Curry, *The Wrong Side of Murder Creek: A White Southerner in the Freedom Movement* (Montgomery, AL: New South Books, 2008), 117–118.

HUMAN RELATIONS AND CIVIL RIGHTS

In March of 1960, Lonnie King, Julian Bond, Herschelle Sullivan, Carolyn Long, Joseph Pierce, and other African American students from Atlanta published a full-page ad in the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* titled "An Appeal for Civil Rights." Using the rhetoric of human relations, the article gave public expression to the goals of the emerging student movement, which far exceeded the issue of merely being able to drink and eat in public restaurants. The ad outlined many of the specific injustices that African Americans endured in what was "supposedly one of the most progressive cities in the South," and declared "to the citizens of Atlanta and to the world" their intent to fight racial injustice with all nonviolent means necessary. "[We have] joined our hearts, minds, and bodies in the cause of gaining those rights which are inherently ours as members of the human race and as citizens these United States," the ad's authors affirmed.[66] The students' platform cast the struggle in broad terms, and demonstrated how the human relations tradition blurred the lines between human rights and civil rights.[67]

In keeping with this trend, the 1961 Seminar sought a "broader context" through the inclusion of a Jewish student as well as an international student studying in the South, since, as Curry and the Advisory Board agreed, "human relations does not mean race relations only."[68] The Southern Project also spent more time planning and hosting trips to

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66 "An Appeal for Human Rights," March 9, 1960, box 1, folder 4 "Individual Protest Centers," *Constance Curry Papers*, Emory University Manuscript, Library, and Rare Book Collection, Atlanta GA.

67 For more on human rights in 20th century American politics, see Borgwardt, *A New Deal for the World*.

68 Arthur Levin from the Anti-Defamation League was a regular seminar speaker on the relationship of racial and religious discrimination. "Minutes of the Southern

the South for international students, often at the request of the State Department. Accordingly, the 1961 Seminar included a more thorough examination of the international implications of Southern race relations. Among the additions to the 1961 Seminar was a discussion session between Seminar participants and nine international student leaders from NSA's Foreign Student Leadership Project on "the meaning of Southern race relations in the world scene."[69] Despite these changes, however, the Seminar still emphasized self-reflection along with its new, more tactical focus. Southern Project leaders still asked students to consider their personal roles within, and relationships to, the existing system of segregation, and how they could stay true to their beliefs. Improving human relations, Connie Curry wrote at the time, "is not always a question of 'doing' but actually of 'being.'"[70]

The relationship between human relations and civil rights remained fluid in the years following the Greensboro sit-ins. In 1961, the Southern Project began its own voter registration project, coordinated by active SNCC member Dorothy Dawson. Yet Curry still tried to maintain a measure of distinction between the Southern Project's human relations work, such as the Seminars, and its escalating civil rights activism. In practice, however, many adherents seemed uncertain of precisely where human relations ended

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Project Advisory Committee Meeting, January 31, 1961," box 1, folder "Advisory Committee – Jan. 1961," *Southern Project Papers*.

69 "The Fourth Southern Student Human Relations Seminar August 1-18, 1961," box 1, folder "Advisory Committee- Jan. 1962," *Southern Project Papers*.

70 "United States National Student Association, The Third Southern Student Human Relations Seminar August 1 - September 1, 1960, Report to the Marshall Field Foundation March, 1961," box 5, folder "Report to the Field Foundation, 1961," *Southern Project Papers*.

and civil rights began. Some continued to view human relations as an academic tradition, while others saw it as an important mode of moral and political struggle.

For segregationists, however, the 1960 sit-ins removed all doubt about what human relations meant. Roy Harris, a Georgia attorney, operative in the racist Eugene Tallmadge political machine, and a Regent of the University of Georgia, published a list of "race mixing" organizations and individuals, which included the NSA Southern Human Relations Project and Connie Curry. Harris's intimidation efforts drew no distinction between "human relations" and "civil rights" organizations. A number of Southern student organizations began to quietly distance themselves from the term, describing their work instead in terms of academic freedom, international affairs, and education.[71]

Even once-enthusiastic institutional supporters of the human relations approach began to question its value by the mid-1960s. By the time the NSA asked for a renewal of its Field Foundation grant in November of 1965, much had changed since the first Southern Student Human Relations Seminar in 1958. Connie Curry had resigned as the Southern Project's director in early 1964, and Will Campbell and Ella Baker had also moved on. The 1964 and 1965 seminars incorporated material unrelated to race relations, and omitted human relations programming entirely, creating a very different experience than previous Seminars.

Most importantly, the political environment in which the Southern Project operated had changed. Field Foundation Executive Director Leslie Dunbar weighed the

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71 "Minutes, Southern Project Advisory Committee Meeting May 31, 1962," box 1, folder – "Advisory Committee - May 1962," Southern Project Papers. See also Mary E. King, *Freedom Song: A Personal Story of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Morrow, 1987).

Southern Project's grant proposal against four similar requests, one of which came from the Southern Student Organizing Committee (SSOC), a newly formed white analogue to the increasingly militant and racially exclusive SNCC. In a letter to NSA president Philip Sherburne, Dunbar confessed his discomfort with extending the Southern Project's funding, and wondered whether the "old human relations approach" had in fact become "outmoded."[72] Although the Southern Project's proposal was the strongest, Dunbar wrote, he saw "more realism in SSOC's methods and attitudes," and suggested that the two join forces in a final attempt to stimulate a white student movement in the South.[73] Dunbar's dismissal of human relations as obsolete and starry-eyed reflected a broadening acceptance among white establishment liberals that, as of late 1965, the dream of building a truly integrated civil rights movement in the South was over.

Realizing that the Field Foundation was preparing to drop the Southern Project's funding specifically because of its human relations framework, Sherburne concurred with Dunbar that "the day of inter-racial gatherings over tea and crumpets (or an RC and a Moon-Pie) is past, or that we should at least speed it on its way."[74] The NSA revised its grant proposal to omit the summer Seminars entirely, and adopt SSOC's goal of organizing white students. "The pressing need," Sherburne wrote to Dunbar in March of

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72 Dunbar, "Letter to Philip Sherburne." *Southern Project Papers*. As a longtime member of the Southern Regional Council (SRC), Dunbar was very familiar with the human relations tradition. From 1961 to 1965 he attempted to usher in "a great historic mind-changing" as the director of the SRC, especially through voter education projects.

73 Dunbar, "Letter to Philip Sherburne." *Southern Project Papers*.

74 Sherburne, "Letter to Leslie Dunbar." *Southern Project Papers*.

1966, "[is] to get these students to play their role in fully integrating the Southern campus."[75]

The Field Foundation renewed the Southern Project's funding for two more years, with the caveat that the grant would be terminal. The NSA tapped Howard Romaine, who was active in SSOC, as the last director of the Southern Project. By Romaine's own admission, his tenure as the Southern Project's director was somewhat disappointing, and his 1968 report to the Field Foundation, chronicling the Southern Project's final year, struck a discouraged and almost apologetic tone. The Project's goal of creating a white student movement in the South no longer made sense given the political realities on most campuses. "[T]he activist, non-violent Southern student civil rights movement has died (on black campuses)," Romaine wrote, "or has been transformed into a militant antiwar movement (on white campuses)."[76] Whereas the Southern Project's role through the early 1960's had been well defined, he continued, by 1967:

> [i]t had become almost impossible for a white person to work directly with the militant nationalist remnant of what was once SNCC and, simultaneously, it was no longer as clear how to involve whites now that their active participatory and supporting role in the movement was no longer desired by the blacks, and . . . their interest was often preoccupied with anti-war activities.[77]

During the preceding year, Romaine had directed most of the Southern Project's resources toward Alabama, hoping to make a more measurable impact on a more modest

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75 Philip Sherburne, "Letter to Leslie Dunbar," 2 March 1966, box 2, folder "Field Foundation, November 1965," *Southern Project Papers*.

76 Romaine, Director's Report, NSA Southern Project, 1967-1968. *Southern Project Papers.*

77 Ibid.

scale. Romaine hired three staff members who were natives of Alabama and alumni of Alabama universities. At a regional NSA meeting in Alabama, he brought Bob Zellner on board, a former NSA Project Seminar participant and a white Alabama native and organizer of poor whites, as well as Bernice Reagon, an African American Freedom singer, both of whom were former SNCC workers. Zellner and Reagon led workshops on topics including white community organizing, student power, and black consciousness. These efforts were limited in their outreach, Romaine acknowledged, because the NSA conferences at which they took place attracted "student government types" more than "student activist types." [78] The Southern Project's concentrated efforts there met with the same difficulties as they had everywhere else in Dixie. There simply was no longer a middle ground to move toward. Romaine's report read as a kind of epitaph for the NSA Southern Student Project in Human Relations, which ceased to exist at the end of 1968.

CONCLUSION

Despite the civil rights movement's spiritual trappings and rhetoric, the American public tends to interpret the period as a moment of civic reform; its object the extension of full citizenship rights to a racialized and historically oppressed underclass. The very label -- "civil rights movement" -- specifically casts the struggle in the context of citizenship and legal equality. And indeed, viewing the movement in such terms makes it easy to understand the objectives of the students who endured taunts and physical abuse merely to sit at segregated lunch counters, to brave police dogs and fire hoses in orderly

78 Romaine, Director's Report, NSA Southern Project, 1967-1968. *Southern Project Papers.*

marches down the street, or to face down flying bullets just to cross a bridge. They did these things, the story goes, as a strategic bid to reveal to the world the injustice of state-sanctioned segregation, and ultimately, to overturn it in American courts and legislatures.

The tradition of human relations initially appears to exist apart from this well-known version of civil rights history. Its approach contrasted sharply by maintaining comparatively timid tactics of gradual and halting change, and focusing more on the attitudes of individuals than on governing institutions. Human relations practitioners believed in the importance of education and interaction in formulating strategy, and in respecting the rights and feelings of all stakeholders—even pro-segregationists. A moderate and deliberative approach to social change, they believed, would bring about more stable and enduring solutions to the problems of race prejudice and segregation than would direct action. Philosophically, civil disobedience rejected such gradualist assumptions, as well as its "step-by-step" prescription for desegregation. The failure of human relations practitioners to keep pace with the movement after the sit-ins revealed the limitations of human relations, and created a generational gap between older and younger activists. For those who rejected the idea of accommodating an unjust system, human relations quickly began to appear not merely passé, but actually counterproductive.

Yet the history of the human relations approach to civil rights reminds us that, for many in the movement, there was more than just overturning the laws of segregation. A real psychological distance existed between passively disapproving of segregation, as many southerners did, and actively resisting it. The human relations tradition was vital in making "the next step" possible. Human relations played a key role in this emotional and intellectual evolution. It provided an entry point and philosophical framework for many in the freedom movement. Casey Hayden's experience illuminates the nexus between

human relations and civil rights activism in the 1950s and early 1960s. The work of human relations, Hayden recalled, was less about race than about "fostering healing and relationships that transcended race. This work undermined and defeated segregation on a personal level, just as bringing down the legal barriers would defeat it politically."[79] Ultimately, the aim of human relations was to instill a universal ethic of human respect and dignity, within which there was no place for racial prejudice.[80]

Connie Curry's characterization of human relations as a question of "being" as well as "doing" suggests one reason why human relations has been largely overlooked in the historiography of the civil rights movement. The public record is biased toward action, rather than personal reflection and interpersonal exchange. Events such as the NSA Seminars created the types of individual conversions that led to civil rights activism, but revelations that take place on the personal level are harder to isolate. Yet they are crucial to our understanding of what sustained many activists who "put their bodies on the line" to fight against segregation. In addition to the well-known public record of speeches, organizing, arrests, and iconic imagery, there remains a vast and undiscovered record of conviction, belief, and faith. The evidence for human relations activities offers new insight into the emotional and intellectual roots of the civil rights movement.

The relationship between human relations and the freedom movement remains both problematic and understudied. Much of the existing history of the early 1960s-era

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79 Casey Hayden, "Fields of Blue," in *Deep in Our Hearts: Nine White Women in the Freedom Movement*, ed. Constance Curry (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2000), 345.

80 Casey Hayden phone interview with the author, September 10, 2008, taped, in author's possession.

civil rights movement focuses, as it should, on the sites at which brave men and women most directly confronted segregation, whether lunch counters, street corners, or county jails. The legacy of human relations is, at best, only intermittently visible in these iconic moments of confrontation. Yet accounting for that legacy is essential to understand what brought many freedom workers to the front lines in the first place. The human relations seminars, particularly in the early years of the Southern Project, were more than "tea parties" between blacks and whites. Prior to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, interracial assembly was not only dangerous, it was illegal in the states of the old Confederacy. By participating in such activities, students defied the color line, confronted their own and each other's beliefs, and often transformed what they believed was possible.

Human relations programming and terminology is ubiquitous in the historical record, but is often misinterpreted as an old-fashioned term for "race relations." Encompassing more than a means of struggle, human relations ideally modeled what students were striving for in their efforts against segregation. D'Army Bailey's memoir recounts the poignant and revelatory nature of the 1961 Southern Project seminar. "It does sound a bit far-fetched for a three-week seminar," Bailey later acknowledged, "but it happened. It happened because somewhere inside, each of us wanted it to. We wanted to be human beings, unlabeled and unclassified, and at least for a moment, *free*."[81]

There are many strands, and many origins, to the long civil rights movement. The visible tension between different lineages of race consciousness and activism is worthy of reconsideration, as it helps to further map the complex foundations of the freedom movement. In its focus on extra-legal structures of power, and in its ability to directly

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81 Bailey and Easson, *The Education of a Black Radical*, 70–71.

address the barriers that kept human beings apart, human relations generated a brief but pivotal historical moment of dialogue and awareness among twentieth century Southern students about the effects of segregation on themselves and others. The NSA's human relations seminars changed minds and hearts, and leant courage to young participants, many of whom went on to make important contributions to the struggle for equality. This orientation preceded notions of identity politics, and perhaps ran counter to them. The concept of human relations became a framework for envisioning a world undivided by race, gender, and nationality. Direct action served the purpose of desegregating the South. But the story of the NSA Southern Student Human Relations Project offered a glimpse of a different South—one that was truly integrated.

Chapter 6: The Student YWCA, Human Relations, and the Quiet Cultivation of Interracial Leadership in the South, 1958-1966

> Our faith as Christians compels us to respond to the universal surge for self-expression among the suppressed peoples of the world. In our nation, amidst a confused and troubled atmosphere, we cannot evade our involvement in perpetuating the structures, traditions, and customs that make any people less human….
>
> We heartily commend the movement of citizens across the South to preserve public education on the basis of the Supreme Court decision of 1954.
>
> We give full support to the students who are actively protesting inequalities and injustices in the spirit of non-violence.[1]
>
> -Student YWCA Southern Regional Assembly, 1960

The Y was quietly ubiquitous in the larger story of the Freedom Movement, serving as a platform for organizing and an incubator for leaders in the movement. Yet few Civil Rights historians have foregrounded the Student Y's sustained day-to-day efforts to change racial attitudes in the twentieth-century South. For young people, the Y provided an opportunity to learn about and connect with the world beyond their local campus and community borders. The campus Y functioned as a gateway to civic activism, cultivating student leadership, providing support for racial progressives, and promoting interracial exchange. In fact, campus Ys often actively facilitated meaningful

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1 "Interracial Statement of Southern Region, National Student YWCA," (As passed by Regional Assembly, meeting at Blue Ridge, NC, June 9, 1960), *YWCA Collection*, Reel 311, Sophia Smith Collection, Neilson Library, Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts.

interracial relationships within an ecumenical framework that transcended traditional denominational teachings, and emphasized the universality of human worth.

By the mid-1950s, southern students felt confident enough to openly challenge racial discrimination and segregation within the friendly confines of Y human relations seminars held discretely within the South. White youth who were active in the YW/YMCA during the late 1940s and 1950s credit these interracial gatherings with opening their eyes to the moral implications of racial discrimination, and to their own unexamined roles in perpetuating it. In turn, these interracial Y gatherings gave rise to experiments in direct action against segregation. Martha Carroll, a white Y member at the University of Texas at Austin, returned from a regional YWCA conference in the mid-1950s and began participating in symbolic protests against segregation around the UT campus in Austin, TX. In one such action, pairs of black and white students would stand in line at a segregated movie theater. Upon reaching the counter, the white student would ask for two tickets. When the manager refused to sell a second ticket for the black student, the pair would quietly return to the back of the line to wait again, while other pairs repeated the action. In addition to disrupting ticket sales, this act of disobedience dramatized the arbitrariness of racial segregation, as well as its financial cost to local businesses. Looking back, Carroll remembered the Y human relations seminar as the moment during which she finally "got it," recognizing for the first time the full extent and destructiveness of segregation in American life. Horrified by her insight, Carroll became determined to fight against it. [2]

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2 Martha Carroll interview with the author, Austin, TX, April 2006, taped, in author's possession.

African American female students also gained strength from an interracial network of progressive women, honing their skills as leaders and developing concrete strategies to achieve their goals. By the late 1950s these youth took the lead in the fight to end racial discrimination, often using the campus Y as their home base and recruiting pool. Leaders in the Student YWCA, including Java Thompson from Southern University, and Mae King from Bishop College, became prominent student demonstration leaders in the early 1960s. Their examples inspired others within the orbit of their campus Ys to commit themselves to the freedom movement.

This chapter highlights the goals and activities of young people who worked within the auspices of the Y's self-termed "student movement" during the late 1950s and early 1960s. International in scope, the idea of a civically engaged student-citizenry informed the Student Y's shift toward human relations work in the South during the late 1950s through the mid-1960s. With over 200 campus chapters on both white and black colleges throughout the South, the Y facilitated student activism in areas where known civil rights organizations like the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) could not gain entry.[3]

Southern segregation sustained itself through the physical and emotional separation of the races, and that separation was enforced by state and local laws, social custom, and when necessary, extralegal violence. But the approach of the Student Y during the 1950s was predicated in the belief that even with these supports, the institution itself was in fact quite weak. Like a dam in danger of collapse, it would take only a few

3 The administrations of both white and black segregated universities often refused to allow known "activist" organizations like SNCC and CORE from meeting on campus, out of fear that they would provoke student action.

cracks to bring the entire edifice down. The job of the Student Y, then, was to create and widen these cracks where possible.

One of the Y's efforts to destabilize the structure of southern segregation was known as the Special Project in Human Relations. Through this effort, the student Y carried out an ambitious program in both the South and Southwest, pushing back against conservative backlash in those regions in the years following the 1960 sit-ins, and increasingly facilitating student direct action projects. Despite having been generally overlooked in the scholarship of the Civil Rights Movement, the Y's human relations work enabled numerous students to develop their talents and beliefs, gain confidence as leaders, and "cut their teeth" as racial justice activists. Many of the alumni of these activities rose to positions of leadership and prominence in the Freedom Movement during the 1960s and 1970s.

THE YWCA STUDENT MOVEMENT

Christian fellowship provided a common platform for women of different classes, races, and nationalities to come together within the YWCA. But the women of the YWCA viewed their mission as distinct from traditional religious pursuits. As other chapters of this dissertation illustrate, those affiliated with the YWCA saw themselves as part of a broader movement working for greater equality for women and minorities throughout the world. The YWCA's "Interracial Charter," its historical focus on working women, and its various programs devoted to improving the living conditions of women throughout the world all reflect this mission. The youth of the Y saw themselves as part

of a broader movement for justice, and this awareness provided both material and psychological support for those who challenged the racial and gender mores in the South.

The environment of the YWCA provided crucial support for women like Dorothy Dawson Burlage, who openly broke with family members over the issue of racial segregation. Burlage, a San Antonio native and white undergraduate at the University of Texas, successfully applied to the Student YWCA's Soviet exchange program in 1959. Since 1956 she had been active in the University of Texas YWCA, where she first encountered and interacted with black students. She recalled of these experiences, "for the first time I felt a clear and strong connection between religion and social justice."[4] When administrators removed African American UT student Barbara Smith from an opera because of her race, Burlage overcame her "palpable" fear of going against "behavior considered appropriate for a lady" by gathering signatures for petitions and joining protests outside of Hogg auditorium. Over forty years later she recalled, "Usually my commitment to the cause of fighting segregation would be stronger than my Southern lady persona and I could act on behalf of principle – but not always. The upbringing of Southern white women with my class background was more repressive than most of us can comprehend these many years later."[5] Nevertheless, for the next three years, she participated in other student protests against segregation in theaters, restaurants (the "Steer Here" drive mentioned in Chapter 2), and joined the "Fellowship of Sitters" whose raison d'etre was to enjoy coffee together in interracial groups around Austin.

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4 Dorothy Dawson Burlage, "Truths of the Heart," in *Deep in Our Hearts: Nine White Women in the Freedom Movement*, ed. Constance Curry (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2000), 96.

5 Ibid., 97.

Young people experienced both the local and international aspects of this struggle through their involvement with the Y. As human relations practitioners like Rosalie Oakes (Dawson's mentor at UT's Y) had emphasized for decades, the YWCA enabled students to actively engage with their counterparts across the color line, and around the world. In 1960, Oakes traveled to South Africa to build local YWCA community programs with South African women living in apartheid in 1960. She frequently wrote Dawson letters encouraging her to fight segregation in the South.

The Y's own international programming also helped to raise the racial awareness of southern students. For example, in the mid-1950s, the Student YWCA began a U.S.-U.S.S.R. exchange program, which sent a cohort of American students behind the "Iron Curtain" to meet and learn from their Soviet counterparts.[6] UT's Dorothy Burlage was among those selected for the 1959 trip. Prior to departure, her cohort traveled to Washington D.C. for a "refresher course" on American foreign and domestic policy, including human rights and the principles of democracy. Although they expected the Soviet students to hew to the "party line," Burlage and her fellow student ambassadors knew that they would be on display, as well. Similar to official ambassadors, the students were expected to effectively parry Soviet critiques of America and the capitalist system, and deny a propaganda victory to America's ideological enemies.[7]

Burlage was not impressed by the fruits of the communist system, and noted the plainly oppressive nature of the Soviet regime despite the efforts of her hosts to carefully manage and orchestrate her group's experiences. She returned from the Soviet Union

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6 The Student YWCA also hosted a Latin American Student Exchange program during this time that operated on the same basis.

7 Phone interview with Dorothy Dawson Burlage, May 7, 2010.

with a renewed commitment to the attainment of true democracy in the United States. During discussions with Soviet students regarding the relative merits of their political systems, however, Burlage found it especially difficult to defend American segregation. When she returned to the U.S., she spoke to numerous YWCA and community groups about her Soviet exchange experience. Dispirited by the hypocrisy of American racial ideologies, she described the difficulties posed by attempting to defend democracy, which denied basic freedoms solely on account of race.[8]

Students discovered that racial discrimination in the United States not only provided fodder for Soviet propaganda, but also prevented them from attaining the Y movement goal of cooperation among international youth, especially those from developing nations. Aside from formal exchange trips, students representing the American YWCA also routinely interacted with students of other nationalities at international youth conferences abroad. Upon return, they shared similar experiences in print and in person at local YWCA chapters and other campus organizations. Margaret Ismaila attended the World Assembly of Youth (WAY) Council Meeting in Accra, Ghana, during the month of August 1960. Ismaila was one of eight American delegates to the conference, which brought together over 400 conferees from 90 different countries, taking as its theme "The Role of Youth Organizations in the Construction of Democratic Nations." The timeliness of the African meeting became immediately obvious when the delegates arrived; their luggage inspection was delayed "due to the departure of the

8 Burlage, "Truths of the Heart," 99.

polemical Premier of the Congo, Patrice Lumumba."[9] The scene at the airport set the tone for the conference, which revolved around issues of decolonization.[10]

After official greetings communicated via heads of state, including President Dwight Eisenhower and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru of India, the young conference delegates spent the first week discussing problems facing their nations. In spirited, daylong workshops, they identified common problems, such as underdeveloped markets and inadequate education, and outlined possible solutions, including structural economic transformation and development.[11]

As the WAY Conference entered its second week, participants divided themselves into five commissions. Ismaila served on the "most political and…volatile" commission: that which addressed human rights. [12] Delegates first presented their own country's human rights issues; accordingly, Ismaila outlined America's problems of segregation, racial discrimination, and the denial of basic civil rights to minorities. Then the youth

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9 Margaret Howard Ismaila, National Student YWCA Representative to the Young Adult Council of the National Social Welfare Assembly, *Report of the World Assembly of Youth Council Meeting, August 9-25, 1960 Accra, Ghana*, n.d., *YWCA Collection*, Box 743, Folder 1, Sophia Smith Collection, Neilson Library, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

10 Ismaila wrote, "As Lumumba, Nkrumah, and their deputies walked across the airstrip midst the pomp and circumstance of the Ghana color guard and troops, we realized that this WAY conference would have special significance by virtue of its place of meeting and the trend of events in Africa and the rest of the world." Ibid.

11 These workshops focused on issues such as "the rights and responsibilities of majorities and minorities, preparation for democracy, international understanding and the mobilization of capital and human resources in order to accelerate economic development and construct social structure."

12 The five commission areas included development, administration, young workers, rural youth, and human rights.

worked together to propose region-wide projects to address human rights concerns. [13] The commission passed 23 resolutions addressing the denial of human rights in various parts of the world, including a sharp condemnation of the French war in Algeria, and an appeal to all of the youth movements of the world to publicly denounce Belgium for its stance against the newly independent Congo. [14]

Even as the student conferees strove to re-cast the world according to a vision of transnational and pan-racial unity, justice and equality, the realities of international politics intruded upon their deliberations. For many African students at the conference, leaders like Lumumba and Nkrumah (the newly elected prime ministers of Congo and Ghana), represented their own desire to reject Western colonialism, rather than to seek accommodation with it.[15] In keeping with the fast pace of decolonization, students from Ghana pressed for the formation of a pan-African youth movement, even if doing so led to the withdrawal of every African delegation from future WAY conferences.

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13 Proposed projects outlined the role of youth to ameliorate common regional problems, including bilateral exchanges, publication of materials in local languages, youth work camps and leader training courses, etc.

14 The WAY delegates called on the United Nations to assist in negotiations to liberate the Algerian people, and requested national and international youth organizations to join in the cause. Other resolutions dealt with the denial of human rights in Southern Rhodesia, Kenya, Tibet, South-West Africa, Germany, and Eastern Europe, the territories ruled by Portugal, and on colonialism, imperialism, and dictatorships in Latin America.

15 The fight for Congolese independence would not long afterward cost Patrice Lumumba his life. After being forced from power a few weeks after the WAY conference, he was tortured and murdered by operatives working on behalf of Belgium and the United States. The Church Committee determined in 1975 the CIA's involvement under the direction of Secretary of State Alan Dulles, and in 2002 Belgium admitted its moral culpability for Lumumba's assassination.

As an American, Ismaila chafed at the charges of "'colonialism, 'Yankee imperialism,'" and other criticisms of U.S. foreign policy. But she interpreted these words as a warning and a challenge for the Y student movement. To wield influence during this "terrible cold war of conflicting ideologies," she observed, Americans had to endure criticism, to live up to their own standards, and to accept that "[w]e cannot always have our way." Criticisms of the U.S. and the UN, she argued, "are but reflections of the discontent of undeveloped nations as they struggle for recognition and equality among member states of an international community." Africa's unrest was a sign of the same kinds of political, economic, and social problems that other emerging nations were also enduring, and the conferees discussed the local and regional context of these issues. When Ismaila returned home, she urged her YWCA colleagues to "realize and respect" the demands of developing nations, and to re-evaluate their organization's programs to account for these fast-moving changes. As part of "an international movement," she argued, Americans "must broaden our horizons in understanding, tolerance" and "[a]bove all we must be positive and just in our dealings" with all people and nations.[16]

In truth, however, there was little that most American college students could do to alter American foreign policy beyond passing resolutions and writing letters to decision-makers. The more that they became informed of international issues, however, the more likely they were to see the struggle for human rights beyond the constricted context of America's national strategic interests. The YWCA facilitated this broadened perspective,

16 In many cases, the idealistic aims and deliberations of postwar youth at gatherings such as the WAY conference contrasted sharply with the practices of the nations they represented. The policy-makers of western nations, especially, worked to covertly undermine popularly elected but non-aligned governments in developing nations.

communicating in terms of human relations. Thus, the notion of being a part of a broader youth movement for justice informed U.S. student perceptions of local racial inequalities.

Among the key differences between international and domestic rights issues was that American youth had greater leverage and latitude to act in support of their beliefs closer to home. So while discussions about ideal relations between nations necessarily remained firmly theoretical, the Student Y began to encourage students to take concrete actions in accordance with these beliefs on the local level.

Human relations programming served as the primary vehicle for these efforts in the South during the late 1950s through the 1960s. The strength of these human relations initiatives derived in part from the structure and comprehensive work of the self-termed "YWCA movement." The YWCA was a democratic, interracial, international organization that crossed class boundaries. When young people in the South considered their role in a system of racial segregation, they did not view it in simply regional terms. Rather, they knew that a broader YWCA movement supported their convictions and actions, even if their families or neighbors did not. As the Maryville College chaplain urged students at a YWCA human relations workshop held in Tennessee in 1962, the Y strove to "[b]e a community – not an organization."[17] This "Community of Believers" drew strength from diverse spiritual understandings of the universal struggle for freedom.

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17 Appendix XVI - "History as Dialogue" (Message delivered on Sunday morning, March 11, 1962 at the Intercollegiate Workshop at Maryville College, Maryville, TN by Dr. E. Fay Campbell, College Chaplain). Appendix XVI, Edna T. Anderson and Ella J. Baker, "Report to the Field Foundation on the Special Project in Human Relations," Sponsored by the College and University Division National Board Young Women's Christian Association, September 1, 1961-August 31, 1962. *YWCA Collection*, Reel 311, Sophia Smith Collection, Neilson Library, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

The Student Y and the National YWCA both supported the sit-in movement when it began in 1960, officially endorsing and sending financial support to aid protesters.

Thus, by the late 1950s, the Student YWCA once again found itself at the vanguard of progressive student activism against segregation, reprising its role in facilitating the Interracial Charter during the 1940s.[18] In 1960, the Student YWCA pushed the national YWCA's Committee on Racial Inclusiveness to strengthen its tepid support of the sit-ins then cropping up across the South. The Student Y submitted a stronger version for consideration by the national board.

The exchange revealed an unusual chasm separating student members of the Y from their adult counterparts.[19] For the student branch of the Y, the national organization's hesitance to take a stronger stand in support of the sit-ins indicated a fundamental "difference in climate" between the youth and their elders. The national Y's

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18 Because of the autonomy of local YWCA associations, the National YWCA was not able to take a united stand against segregation as its leaders hoped. In 1960, the YWCA national president wrote Woolworth's to protest its segregated lunch counters. The vice president of the company replied matter of factly that company policy was to comply as much as possible with local community standards. He also pointed out that the YWCA's cafeteria facilities remained segregated in some of the South, tacitly charging the organization with hypocrisy. Though the national YWCA directed local branches to desegregate, community YWCAs chose to enforce or disregard this directive at will, a point not lost on the executives of the YWCA. Woolworths had more leverage over its branches to change those standards than the YWCA, but the company's rebuttal was powerful, because it asked how the YWCA could demand that a business buck community standards if the voluntary organization itself did not. Students would also lead the way in becoming more militant on this point in the mid-1960s, actively dissolving affiliation with "rogue" YWCAs that refused to integrate their programs.

19 "Minutes of the National Student YWCA Administrative Committee", November 19, 1960, *YWCA Collection*, Box 743, Folder 1, Sophia Smith Collection, Neilson Library, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

resolution, the Student Y argued, "contained implications and phraseology which did not communicate the intense urgency which students feel should characterize Human Relations in this moment in history." Forced to either support the students' stance or create a public split within the larger organization, the National Y ultimately adopted the students' bolder position, advocating a more activist philosophy toward the sit-ins which included a personal responsibility to act.[20]

In fact, many YWCA student members participated in the 1960 sit-ins or in similar direct action experiments in the period leading up to them. Recently trained in nonviolent tactics by the SCLC, students from historically black Bishop and Wiley Colleges staged sit-ins in the town of Marshall, Texas in March of 1960. Among the leaders of the demonstrations was Bishop College student Mae C. King, an African American woman who served as the 1959-1960 Chairman of the National Student YWCA.[21] The authorities in Marshall reacted to the sit-ins with force, tear gas, water hoses, and arrests, dispersing more than 700 black and white protestors gathered in front of the courthouse.[22] The Student YWCA rallied behind the protestors, collected funds to bail King and the other arrestees out of jail, and paid for their legal representation, emergency assistance, and scholarship aid. [23]

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20 Rather than a recommendation to work "with groups where they are; the students feel that no matter where you are you do not have to remain in your group and that all groups can have interchange from communication." Ibid.

21 Ibid. Bishop College was also the alma mater of James L. Farmer, Jr., a founder of the Congress of Racial Equality and organizer of the 1961 Freedom Rides.

22 Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity*, 120.

23 Celestine Smith, Consultant in Human Relations, "Memorandum to National Student YWCA Re: Contributions Received for the Sit-In Movement", November 18,

When student demonstration leaders, many of whom were YWCA participants, faced arrest and endured jail time, the national YWCA provided both moral and material support, serving as observers at trials, and negotiating with administrators for the readmission of those who had been expelled from their schools for their activism.[24] In 1960, national YWCA officer Ruth Hughes flew to Marshall, Texas, to support the Student YWCA president, Mae King. Labeling Hughes an "outsider," the court barred her from witnessing King's trial. Unfazed, Hughes regularly updated the Y's membership of new developments in the case, and helped secure legal representation for King. In Marshall and elsewhere, the YWCA acted as a supporter and legitimizer of student actions, and lent its considerable moral authority to their nonviolent tactics of direct action against racial segregation.

Mae King received a hero's welcome when she came to the University of Texas to speak about her experience after being released from jail. Casey Hayden, then a graduate student at UT, recalled the emotion that ran through the packed auditorium as King shared the details of her experience.[25]

Similar emotions also electrified the 1960 National Student Y Assembly, which drew together thousands of students – some veterans of the sit-ins, some agnostic or confused about the new tactics, and some flatly opposed the very idea of direct action. Despite their differences, those assembled managed to pass "A Declaration of Christian Intention" on the role of students and segregation, laying out in clear terms the group's

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1960, YWCA Collection, Box 743, Folder 1, Sophia Smith Collection, Neilson Library, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

24 "Marshall sit-ins," box 1, folder 4, *Constance W. Curry Papers, 1951-1997*, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University, Decatur, GA.

25 Hayden, "Fields of Blue," 339.

analysis of the moral and Christian dimensions of the protests against racial discrimination. The written declaration outlined their perspective on the sit-ins, the South, and the Christian dimensions to the struggle. It also suggested ways to set up campus "Study and Involvement" groups to support the movement and collect information on local discrimination "composed preferably on an interconfessional, international, and interracial basis." Their statement also made explicit the connection between the nascent sit-in demonstrations in the American South and the freedom struggles taking place elsewhere around the globe. "In our minds," the students wrote, "we can not disassociate this [sit-in] movement, with its nonviolent techniques and its "passive insistence" on recognition of basic respect for human right and dignity, from the earth shaking events of our times whether they take place in Hungary, Algeria, or South Africa…."[26] No matter where it took place, non-violent resistance against coercive and state-backed injustice united its participants in ecumenical fellowship.

The YWCA consciously worked to emphasize interracial, but also intergenerational unity, managing to stave off the threat of a generational split over flashpoint social issues like segregation.[27] Members of the Oklahoma State University Y

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26 "Report on 'Students and Segregation'-- a Declaration of Christian Intention," at the II General Assembly of the National Student Christian Federation, Denver, Colorado, September 1960, *YWCA Collection*, Reel 311, Sophia Smith Collection, Neilson Library, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

27 The leaders of the Student YWCA sent a letter of thanks to the national YWCA board, expressing a "new confidence that persons of all ages can increasingly find new ways of working together to achieve a greater degree of justice in our democratic society….We are strengthened as we go back to our campus in the knowledge that we have the prayers and support of our national movement…." Connie Milliken to YWCA President Barnes, September 27, 1960, in *National YWCA Bulletin: News from "600,"* Volume 10, Number 8, October, 1960, *YWCA Collection*, Reel

organized a human relations conference with the local community YWCA on the subject, "Are You Concerned Enough?" with the explicit goal of "developing closer relationships between students and adults as members of one great movement."[28] The statement lent moral encouragement to Southerners in particular—as both black and white students risked ostracism within their communities by acting on their beliefs. Scapegoated and isolated at home, some Southern students turned to the Y for direction and emotional support in their lonely and frightening battles against the color line.

At the 1961 annual Student YWCA conference in Denver, Colorado, delegates repeatedly spoke of the value "of being a part of and morally supported by the larger movement of the total YWCA."[29] One Southern student leader, speaking before the entirety of the convention's 2,500 participants, credited the YWCA as having been "tremendously important to students, facing hostility and resentment in their crisis situations, to know that there were women in communities across the land who stood behind them, indeed stood with them…" She expressed gratitude to the YWCA for many reasons, but especially for the "opportunity to come together as human beings, to know and confront one another as persons, irrespective of race." The women of the Y were connected by more than the mere accident of their birthplaces, but by their shared mission to attain "the recognition of human dignity and full personhood, as well as to

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311, Sophia Smith Collection, Neilson Library, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

28 "Workshop in Human Relations," Oklahoma State University, April 30, 1961. *YWCA Collection*, Reel 311, Sophia Smith Collection, Neilson Library, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

29 Young Women's Christian Association, "A Report Prepared for the Jacob R. Schiff Charitable Trust," August 31, 1961, 8. *YWCA Collection*, Reel 311, Sophia Smith Collection, Neilson Library, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

working toward the realization of this in the social order."[30] The YWCA was unique in its ability to "maintain the dynamic unity of a true movement."

THE SPECIAL PROJECT IN HUMAN RELATIONS

The YWCA began to increase its human relations efforts in the mid-1950s, when some Southerners waged vigorous opposition to the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision and the prospect of desegregation. The subjects of human and race relations began to dominate Y conventions and workshops. The annual National Student Assembly of the Y held in late December 1958 drew over a thousand students; its Race Relations workshop attracted 250 participants and additional informal race relations sessions "often lasted through the night" and "influenced the entire Assembly." After the 1958 conference the Student Y reported that "[w]ithin the Student Movement of the YWCA, regionalism began to diminish and a national approach to the problem of race relations emerged."[31] This "new impetus" on "interracial concerns" and desegregation on both northern and southern campuses guided the Y in its plans to expand human relations efforts even before the sit-ins garnered national attention on the issue.

The impact of these cross-racial interpersonal reactions on participants led to the development of a new kind of human relations effort specifically dedicated to breaking down racial barriers on an interpersonal level. In 1958, the Student YWCA dedicated funds received from the Jacob R. Schiff Charitable Trust toward the creation of an

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30 Ibid., emphasis in original.

31 Young Women's Christian Association, "A Report Prepared for the Jacob R. Schiff Charitable Trust," August 31, 1961, 2-3. *YWCA Collection*, Reel 311, Sophia Smith Collection, Neilson Library, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

entirely new human relations initiative.[32] The Y first focused its efforts on building communication between students and faculty, black and white students, and Y participants with the leaders of other groups working for racial justice. They also concentrated on training in human relations, holding a workshop for Student Y leaders that NAACP attorney Thurgood Marshall, Harold Fleming (Southern Regional Council), and sociologist Kenneth Clark addressed in the summer of 1959. The YWCA developed a strategy for intensive race relations work at campuses throughout the South and Southwest, known as the Special Project in Human Relations. Similar to the NSA's Southern Student Human Relations Project, the Marshall Field Foundation funded this initiative from 1960 to 1967.

By comparison, the YWCA Special Project was much wider in scope than the NSA project, drawing upon greater staff and organizational resources, and spanning a much broader geographical area. The Y's extensive and well-established institutional infrastructure offered a ready-made platform for organizing the new human relations efforts, with annual national, regional, and section meetings, and active Y chapters on approximately 200 black and white campuses in the South. Moreover, the Student Y had a trove of experience upon which to draw, gathered over forty years of working to develop a woman's movement across "racial, social, and economic groups" in America. The new human relations project was somewhat different than the Y's past efforts, however, as it was directed at reform within the organization and among its membership.

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[32] Also in 1958, the NSA responded with a similar effort of its own, known as the Special Project in Human Relations (the subject of the previous chapter).

If the Y was to lead efforts to increase "inclusiveness…in national life," then its chapters and members must effect and live that ideal for themselves first.[33]

The YWCA Special Project maintained permanent adult staffs for both its Southeast and Southwest regions. Edna T. Anderson, a white native of Texas, led the Southwestern division, which included Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Texas, while Ella Baker, an African American activist who would later become a towering figure in the Civil Rights Movement, oversaw the much larger Southeast region, which included Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.[34] Before she became the "Godmother of SNCC," Baker was an active member of the Student YWCA, and a mentor to a cohort of student leaders from within the YWCA, including Dorothy Dawson Burlage, Mary King, and Casey Hayden.[35] Under the auspices of the YWCA's Special Project, Baker recruited students to the movement as she toured Southern college campuses in the early 1960s.[36]

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33 Edna T. Anderson and Ella J. Baker, "Report to the Field Foundation on the Special Project in Human Relations, Sponsored by the College and University Division National Board Young Women's Christian Association, September 1, 1960-August 31, 1961," 1. *YWCA Collection*, Reel 311, Sophia Smith Collection, Neilson Library, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

34 In addition to newly graduated college interns (discussed in this chapter), two other women, Mary Moss Cuthbertson and Barbara Thompson, assisted the Human Relations staff with visits to Southern campuses.

35 Ella Baker earned her bachelor's degree at Shaw University in Raleigh, NC, which hosted significant numbers of foreign exchange students during her time there. But even before college, Baker showed an interest in global affairs. As a high schooler in Raleigh, she attended a lecture at the Student YWCA by Max Yergen, a Shaw graduate who served as a missionary in South Africa with the YMCA for seventeen years, and founded the Council of African Affairs with Paul Robeson in 1942. Baker credited Yergen and his wife, a faculty member at Shaw, for instilling in her a sustained interest in South Africa and apartheid. As a college student, she raised funds for Shaw's Student Friendship Fund, which helped

Baker's first task was to recruit a support staff for the Y's Special Project, who would foster the "peer group relationships" that were so important to the ongoing work of human relations. From 1960 until 1962, Baker assembled a core group of activists at the Special Project's headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia. Among them were Casey Hayden, a recent white graduate of the University of Texas at Austin, Roberta "Bobbi" Yancy, an African American alumna of Barnard College, and Mary King from Ohio Wesleyan.

Although the Project's emphases varied each year to keep pace with the changing environment on college campuses, several consistent goals guided its work. Above all, the project aimed to create better understanding between white and black students, and to pave the way for successful integration in the South. They evaluated the degree of desegregation on campuses and in surrounding communities, served as a "listening post" to students and faculty who felt trapped and bereft of progressive allies in their campus communities, and identified problem areas that needed special attention. They also created programs designed to stimulate student action to end racial discrimination.

By emphasizing the historic mission of the YWCA, the Special Project strove to convey the responsibility of individuals in local chapters to work toward the real integration of their campuses. At each university, the Y staff sought to gauge the

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finance the building of schools and churches abroad. She was a member of the Student YWCA and she attended a national Student YWCA conference in New York City in the mid-1920s. Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 57–58.

36 Ella Baker was a good friend of Rosetta Gardner, the director of the Southern regional Student YWCA. Baker's organizing skills and ability to bring people of different backgrounds together provided the ideal skillset for the project. The position, based in Atlanta, allowed Baker to continue to "build, nurture, and protect SNCC," which she had helped found just months before. Ibid., 260.

potential for human relations activities on the campus. Student, faculty, and administrative reaction to the YWCA's commitment to integration provided one indicator of this. Some learned of it for the first time from Project staff; others had no problem discussing it hypothetically, but wanted their Campus Y to stay away from "controversial issues." Where no YWCA existed, or in areas where local affiliates were unreceptive to the idea, staff encouraged the formation of a human relations committee through alternative organizations or the student government, depending on the circumstances. In all of these efforts, they attempted to identify individual leaders who would benefit from participation in regional Human Relations initiatives.

A handful of southern schools with university YWCAs maintained full-time staff members, including the University of North Carolina and the University of Texas, which allowed those chapters to host frequent conferences, workshops, and other events. For example, the campus Ys at the University of Texas at Austin and Tougaloo Southern Christian College in Jackson, Mississippi, organized a weeklong student exchange beginning in the 1959-1960 school year. White and black UT students went to Tougaloo the first year, and black students from Tougaloo visited UT in February 1961. These exchanges created dialogue and trust among Southern students, who witnessed the similarities and differences in their college experiences in the region, and opened up possibilities for further interracial action. Inspired by the experience, several of the Tougaloo students who participated in the Y exchange initiated the first nonviolent protest in Mississippi, a successful "read in" at the white Jackson public library, just a

month after returning from Austin.[37] The YWCAs of Spelman College and Wake Forest University would create a similar exchange program.

Such programmatic efforts required not just courageous leadership from students and faculty, but also dedicated and disciplined organizational work. Most campus Y chapters did not have the benefit of full-time staff to help in this regard. For this reason, the YWCA Special Project in Human Relations encouraged campus Ys to pool their resources, and work together to develop and support innovative programming, particularly in some of the more isolated areas of the American South.

Y Special Project advisors Edna Anderson and Ella Baker identified racial isolation as the overriding obstacle to effective human relations in the region. This held true for almost every campus - white, black, and token desegregated. Thus, opening channels of communication through intercollegiate gatherings became a top priority. To spur this type of interaction between whites and blacks, there simply was no substitute for direct, face-to-face facilitation. Anderson and Baker traveled all over the South, visiting as many campuses as possible, and recording their observations along the way. The notes they kept on their various campus visits show a vast range of student opinion and thoughtfulness about completely desegregating higher education in the South. Predictably, many white students felt threatened by the prospect, while others worried about its implementation. Black students also expressed a complicated mix of opinions

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37 Edna T. Anderson and Ella J. Baker, "Report to the Field Foundation on the Special Project in Human Relations, Sponsored by the College and University Division National Board Young Women's Christian Association, September 1, 1960-August 31, 1961," 45. *YWCA Collection*, Reel 311, Sophia Smith Collection, Neilson Library, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

about desegregating all southern campuses. While the idea seemed desirable to most, many worried that the schools they attended, in which they took great pride, might be swept aside in the process.

In addition to addressing these concerns, the Special Project also sought to educate students on the rudiments of the study and the practice of human relations. It sought first to familiarize student participants with the basic causes and nature of human prejudice. Only then could they begin to understand how race discrimination affected housing and employment, how legislation and jurisprudence combined to uphold the color line, and how heretofore-invisible power structures in their own communities normalized the practice of racism. The Y staff recognized that simply "spoon-feeding" such insights to participants was pointless. Instead, they encouraged their students to gather such knowledge for themselves, offering support and advice for students interested in surveying racial interaction and methods of exclusion in their own communities.

While such a self-directed educational process proved more effective than other teaching methods, Y organizers found that effecting social change in this manner could be maddeningly slow. Students throughout the South faced fundamental challenges to their academic freedom and rights of free inquiry on campus. Most were accustomed to learning by rote, and found the concept of independent learning novel and confusing, at least initially. Discouraged by their educators and administrators, many students ultimately found it easier to remain on more certain intellectual and emotional ground.[38]

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38 Ella Baker, project director of the Y Special Project in Human Relations in the Southeast, reported that on one white segregated campus in South Carolina, students reacted with disbelief when she asked them if they had interacted with students from nearby black colleges. The white students did not think this was possible, since they had been led to believe that no black colleges existed in South Carolina!

The physical isolation of most college campuses in the South further added to the difficulties. In many cases, students had few chances for interaction with the communities bordering their schools, regardless of racial composition. Despite this isolation however, they used the Y as a line of communication with like-minded students at other campuses. This was difficult in some states unless those gatherings were held outside of the state. Ella Baker found that at State College in Orangeburg, South Carolina, the women students in the Y held "a deep sense of frustration at not being able to identify with progressive interracial student gatherings" conducted in the state by organizations like the South Carolina Council of Human Relations. Here and elsewhere, a fear of legislative reaction and pressure from university trustees and administrators prevented both black and white youth from participating in intercollegiate events. [39]

Students who sought to participate in interracial, intercollegiate events frequently encountered administrative obstacles on southern college campuses. On segregated campuses, administrators often required parental permission before permitting students to participate in interracial activities, effectively limiting the number of participants. Such was the case at all-female Agnes Scott University, at which students were permitted to

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39 Similarly, four white students from a segregated college in Louisiana heard from a Methodist student worker (who was fired due to his integrationist sentiments) about an interracial workshop then taking place at Bishop College. They attended, despite the fact that two of them claimed their fathers would never allow them to return home if they knew of their attendance. Edna T. Anderson and Ella J. Baker, "Report to the Field Foundation on the Special Project in Human Relations, Sponsored by the College and University Division National Board Young Women's Christian Association, September 1, 1960-August 31, 1961," 16, 16. *YWCA Collection,* Reel 311, Sophia Smith Collection, Neilson Library, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

leave campus for any reason except to attend an interracial event.[40] African American students faced similar obstacles. In general, state governments threatened to withhold necessary public funds as a means of keep historically black universities in line. Administrators at those schools discouraged student activism for fear of losing the funding their schools needed to survive. Black schools that had done well financially under the existing system, including Southern University and Grambling State College, came down particularly harshly on students perceived as troublemakers.[41] The president of Southern University closed the campus down and forced all students to re-enroll as a way of expelling student protest leaders in 1961. Private black colleges such as Fisk University and Spelman College relied less on public funds, and thus tended to tolerate and even nurture student political leadership.

Edna Anderson and Ella Baker described a paternalistic tendency in the interactions between faculty and students at many African American colleges. They witnessed this pattern at work "in the attempt by faculty advisors to help the students to make a good showing by carrying the major load for them in special assignments."[42] They also observed that "[i]t is more pronounced on campuses where many of the

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40 Similarly, at all-white Hendrix College in TN, the president agreed to waive his unwritten policy of requiring a written parental permission for students to attend an interracial Y intercollegiate workshop in 1961. (They did not need permission to leave campus for shopping or other reasons). Instead, he insisted that they obtain verbal permission, but Y staff noted that many women could not bring themselves to ask. Edna T. Anderson and Ella J. Baker, "Report to the Field Foundation," 20.

41 When Y project staff visited the Student Y at Grambling College in 1960-1961, they noted an "appreciation at Grambling for the splendid educational facilities but there is deep resentment at the reason they were acquired." Ibid., 43.

42 Ibid., 71.

students come from the plantation delta areas of Arkansas and Louisiana." But they noted a change in this dynamic beginning in the late 1950s, and hailed the growing tendency of black students at segregated colleges in the region to "free themselves from the paternalism of their elders." To combat this pattern that stifled student initiative, they tried to provide opportunities for students and faculty to relate to one another "in general as persons" in relationships "devoid of paternalism." YWCA Special Project encouraged independent student action, and thus introduced "a growth-producing experience" for both students and faculty in these colleges.[43]

From the outset, the YWCA Special Project in Human Relations recognized that it was dealing with many different "Souths," and thus, had to employ a variety of strategies to cultivate white and black student leadership. In a report to the Field Foundation, which was helping to fund the Special Project, Baker and Anderson noted that the "emotional content related to segregation" varied widely between and within states. Yet, they also observed, some deeply-held cultural patterns transcended locality and region, including a "strong…sectional consciousness" that made southerners feel "alien to" the rest of the nation. The South was also united by its unusual degree of rigidity in matters of law and custom—particularly where they intersected with race.

There were, however, hopeful signs as well—indications that "traditional patterns of race relations" in the South were perhaps more malleable than they appeared. The transition from an agrarian economy to a more industrial economy, migration to urban centers, the expansion of metropolitan areas, and the deterioration of the political "solid South," all held out some possibility for weakening the color line.[44] Moreover, the

43 Ibid., 15.

44 Ibid., 2-3.

punishing drop-off in commerce in areas of overt racial crisis such as Little Rock, Arkansas, were a "rude awakening" to local segregationists, as well an example to other localities of what could come from taking a strong public stand to block integration.

However, Baker and Anderson insisted in their report to the Field Foundation that student direct action to desegregate restaurants and public facilities was doing more than anything else to alter race relations in the region. Increasingly, African American students, rather than "old-line white politicians," were "charting the course of social change" in the South. And they represented only a fraction of the potential of southern students. It remained the case, Baker and Anderson wrote, that the "majority of Negro or white students will not be found on the picket line. They must be reached through other channels: personal contact, group and intergroup meetings and discussions, direct and indirect approaches. Herein lies the task of the YWCA's human relations program."[45]

That task, it was becoming increasingly clear, simply could not be accomplished by women of Baker and Anderson's generation. Despite efforts to unify women across age groups, students who participated in interracial human relations workshops spoke about the movement for equality in generational terms. At a human relations workshop composed of black students from Philander Smith College, Arkansas A&M College, and white students from Hendrix College, held in Little Rock in April 1961, student groups reflected on the unique role of students in facilitating desegregation. "Our society," wrote one discussion group, "is a three-layer society – the older group who find it hard to change, the middle group, ourselves, and the younger children. We must let our voices

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45 Ibid., 3-4.

be heard."[46] Similarly, Larry Manire, Y president at Del Mar Junior College in Corpus Christi, Texas, invited members to attend a founding meeting of a group to "responsibly and constructively investigate, negotiate, and act if necessary" against segregation. Because the city and campus remained in a state of "complacent procrastination," he explained, many "felt that it is time to stop waiting for our community 'leaders' to do something and for students to take the initiative." But he cautioned against any publicity other than word-of-mouth notice to concerned persons in order to avoid "'name branding' that might result."[47] Manire encouraged Y members to gather facts and enlist other young people. "Remember also," he said, "that not only do we need more white support; we need more Negro support."

One of the ways the Special Project brought whites and blacks in dialogue with one another was to utilize existing organizational structures and to incorporate human relations youth training into their programs. In 1962, the YWCA teamed up with the Texas Social Welfare Association to host an interracial workshop on human relations. Debbie Green, a white student from Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, Texas, wrote that this was the first time she had ever roomed and become a friend with someone of another race. Likewise, she dined publicly in an interracial group at a high-end

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46 "Human Relations Workshop," Little Rock, Arkansas, April 16, 1961, Sponsored by the Student Christian Association of Philander Smith College. Theme: "Social Change Affecting Human Relations." *YWCA Collection*, Reel 311, Sophia Smith Collection, Neilson Library, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

47 The Y president defined a concerned person as "one who feels that there is definitely a problem and because of his beliefs (Christian or other) feels that he should be actively engaged in helping to solve the problem rather than being a part of it." Larry Mainre to Members of Del Mar Student Christian Association and interested persons, February 9, 1961, *YWCA Collection*, Reel 311, Sophia Smith Collection, Neilson Library, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

department store in downtown Dallas for the first time. "[W]e noticed that there was no alarm or excitement at our presence; not even any stares." She reflected, "I was very surprised that this high socio-economic group would act in this manner." [48] She developed several interracial friendships, and by the end of the workshop, they had made plans to visit each other's campuses. Another important aspect of this joint workshop was the cross-generational dialogue that it cultivated among women. Green wrote that "I have been very pessimistic about what adults are doing in the world today, but this meeting has renewed my faith in them and I have gained much more respect for the older generation." The encounter with working professionals in the arena of human relations broadened her sense of her own possibilities as well. She acknowledged, "…my new knowledge of the adult's role and responsibility makes me look forward to being one; for now there seems so much to do rather than just having a cute house and cute kids in a good neighborhood. Life is now more interesting; there is so much to be done."[49] The effectiveness of such workshops were difficult to measure, the YWCA Special Project proceeded in the belief that the cumulative effect of individual "awakenings" such as these would render leadership in the region.

At an interracial Southwest regional intercollegiate meeting a few weeks later, which was held at Camp Pinkston in Lancaster, Texas, ten students from nine colleges

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48 Appendix XII - "Excerpts Selected From Some of the Letters Received from Students who were Enabled by Project Funds to Attend the Conferences or Intercollegiate Meetings Indicated Below," Edna T. Anderson and Ella J. Baker, "Report to the Field Foundation on the Special Project in Human Relations," Sponsored by the College and University Division National Board Young Women's Christian Association, September 1, 1961-August 31, 1962. *YWCA Collection*, Reel 311, Sophia Smith Collection, Neilson Library, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

49 Ibid.

updated one another on the status of human relations efforts in their campus communities.[50] Many reported progress in the desegregation of local theaters, restaurants, barbershops, and bowling alleys. Others encountered considerable resistance; administrators at Texas Christian University, where only the School of Theology allowed African American applicants, forbade students from holding a human relations workshop on campus, warning them that their activism endangered the school's relationship with the surrounding communities of Fort Worth.[51] The students of Texas College, a segregated all-black school, had no student government and faced strict administrative restrictions for acting without the school's official sanction. Given such little latitude to act on behalf of their own beliefs and concerns, Texas College students retaliated against their school's administration by refusing to participate its designated "Tag" day, during which they were expected to help raise money for the United Negro College Fund. One student described his refusal as a way of disrupting the system that

50 Students attended from SMU, Bishop College, TSU, Del Mar College, Central State College, Langston University, Arkansas A& M, Texas College, TCU, and Hendrix College.

51 Specifically, students were warned by Texas Christian University administrators that "any move to desegregate the town will set TCU back ten years," perhaps referring both to fund raising, and to any progress made in desegregation during the past decade. "Minutes – Frontiers in Race Relations Committee of the Southwest Regional Council of Student YMCA and YWCA," November 3-5, 1961, Kiwanis "Y" Camp, Dallas, Texas, and "Human Relations Workshop," Little Rock, Arkansas, April 16, 1961, Sponsored by the Student Christian Association of Philander Smith College. Both in *YWCA Collection*, Reel 311, Sophia Smith Collection, Neilson Library, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

sustained segregated higher education, and dismissed the United Negro College Fund as "a way of keeping us [black students] across the tracks."[52]

These wildly varying attitudes from state to state, school to school, and person to person made the work of the Y's Special Project particularly fraught with complexity. Edna Anderson and Ella Baker also contended with what they called the "vast differences between the human relations potentials in such hard-core states as Alabama and Mississippi and the less inflexible states of North Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas."[53] Even within the hard-core states, there was hope for student action; Ella Baker declared Tougaloo "an oasis in Mississippi," and Tuskegee managed to hold interracial gatherings with a nearby white college in Alabama.[54] At a workshop on "Responsible Citizenship" organized by the Tuskegee Y in April 1961, seventy-two students from seven schools attended, including four white students from LaGrange College in LaGrange, Georgia. Students planned and directed the workshop sessions, but faculty and community leaders from the Tuskegee Civic Association guided them as they made plans for future action, including a voter registration project.

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52 "Minutes – Frontiers in Race Relations Committee," Camp Pinkston, Lancaster, Texas, April 28-30, 1961, *YWCA Collection*, Reel 311, Sophia Smith Collection, Neilson Library, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

53 Edna T. Anderson and Ella J. Baker, "Report to the Field Foundation on the Special Project in Human Relations, Sponsored by the College and University Division National Board Young Women's Christian Association, September 1, 1960-August 31, 1961," 1. *YWCA Collection*, Reel 311, Sophia Smith Collection, Neilson Library, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

54 Ibid., 45, 48.

One immediate result came out of the Tuskegee workshop. Four white students from LaGrange College were so motivated by the information they heard about African Americans struggling to protect their voting rights in Macon County, Georgia, that, according to Ella Baker, "they were moved to action. They went home, gathered information and facts on Negro voters in their own county and publicized these facts on the campus an in their community at large." While such an immediate and profound response was generally atypical, the workshops that the YWCA Special Project in Human Relations did help change individual attitudes on not just racial discrimination, but enabled students to change the social conditions that contributed to it in the South.

In general, students in the Southwestern states of Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Texas could speak more freely about racial issues than their eastern counterparts. The Student Y regional meetings in the Southwest had been integrated since 1928, almost twenty years prior to those in the Southeast. Moreover, in 1960, African American students waged prominent student demonstrations at Philander Smith College in Little Rock, Texas Southern University in Houston, and Bishop and Wiley Colleges in Marshall, Texas.

But the greater openness to student activism did not imply the absence of danger. In response to the sit-ins at the Texas schools, "rightist" groups like the John Birch Society and white citizen's councils coalesced to defend segregation and white privilege. Baker and Anderson quickly noticed a "change in the social and political climate" of the state, as students faced retaliation and harassment, and local organs of government in cities like Houston came completely under the sway of anti-segregationists. In 1961, the Special Project staff noted that the influence of the right had grown so sufficiently

that the "Houston school board is under the complete domination of these movements."[55] The breadth and stridency of the backlash in Texas was greater by several orders of magnitude than the relatively small events that supposedly precipitated them, and by the early 1960s, Texas was home to more "Birchers" than any state except California. Instances of retaliation against and harassment of students engaged in interracial advocacy caused great fear in the region.

The backlash against integration in Texas during the early 1960s achieved many of its intended effects. A state bill was nearly passed which outlawed sit-in demonstrations and the state replaced its school text books to present a far more conservative view of America's racial history. The John Birch Society effectively attacked school counseling as a "brain-washing" technique used to numb pupils to "leftist" teaching, and a good number of politically active school and college teachers lost their jobs.[56] A high-profile series of eight articles in the *Dallas Morning News* attacked the University of Texas at Austin YM/YWCA, accusing the organization of "controversial" actions that bore no resemblance to the religious mission of the

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55 Ibid., 7.

56 The YWCA Special Project in Human Relations identified twelve specific illustrations of the conservative shift in Texas in their 1961-1962 report to the Field Foundation, including the refusal of the Houston public school system to allow students to partake in the federal school lunch program, and the opposition of a prominent Texas newspaper chain to public schools in the state, arguing that they were a socialist practice. Edna T. Anderson and Ella J. Baker, "Report to the Field Foundation on the Special Project in Human Relations," Sponsored by the College and University Division National Board Young Women's Christian Association, September 1, 1961-August 31, 1962, 3-4. *YWCA Collection*, Reel 311, Sophia Smith Collection, Neilson Library, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

organization when it originated at UT in 1858. Conservative adult YMCA board members opposed the Student Y's advocacy of full integration at UT, and in conjunction with the *Dallas Morning News* accusations, the area YMCA passed a resolution ordering an investigation of the Student Y at UT. The effect of these attacks reverberated beyond Texas; YWCA human relations staff noted the climate of fear that they produced among the student Y's in Tulsa, Oklahoma, where the "power structure" was "ultra-conservative in thinking," as well as at Hendrix College in Conway, Arkansas.[57]

But students in the region withstood the withering conservative pushback. At human relations workshops, students analyzed the propaganda and actions of extremist groups, identifying "the philosophy [sic] of these groups…[as] the greatest barriers to integration in Texas, Arkansas, and Oklahoma."[58] The students of Texas Southern University (created by the Texas legislature in 1947 after Heman Sweatt applied to the UT Law school) formed their own nonviolent direct action group, called the Progressive Youth Association.[59] The administration forced the group off-campus, but nonetheless,

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57 Edna Anderson reported that [t]he impact of extreme rightist groups on the Tulsa University campus strongly influenced our decision to visit the campus for a second year." Dominated by a board of wealthy, conservative, and politically powerful trustees, the private school enrolled 3200 students, and had desegregated nominally although black students were not allowed to live on campus or participate in athletics. Anderson observed that the campus "receive[s] a double indoctrination in rightist philosophy, for approximately 80 percent of the students are Tulsa residents." Ibid.

58 Ibid., 6.

59 Texas Southern University had token desegregation; out of 3600 students in the 1961-1962 school year, up to 30 white students were enrolled.

"[m]any silent people of Houston" funded its efforts to desegregate the city's theaters, for which they were later arrested.[60]

The Y Special Project originally entertained higher hopes for the Houston area, given the large influx of federal money to fund NASA's new facilities in the area. But the Y's Houston experience demonstrated how easily its efforts could also be weakened from within. Although the African American students at Texas Southern held their ground, unfortunately, the white faculty advisor of the Student Y Human Relations Committee in 1962 undermined their efforts by her insistence that several of the students, as well as Edna Anderson herself, were secret communists "intent on 'ruining' the YWCA."

Despite the students' disregard for the faculty advisor's paranoia, her accusations and attempts to divide students took a toll.[61] One YWCA leader at Texas Southern University, who had been active in the student movement since the beginning, voiced her belief that "standing in picket lines, being insulted, going to jail and paying fines to try to achieve an impossible goal was ridiculous and she intend[ed] to have no more of it." She

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60 Edna T. Anderson and Ella J. Baker, "Report to the Field Foundation on the Special Project in Human Relations," Sponsored by the College and University Division National Board Young Women's Christian Association, September 1, 1961-August 31, 1962, 8-9. YWCA Collection, Reel 311, Sophia Smith Collection, Neilson Library, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

61 Ibid., 14-15. Note that Texas Southern University was created by the Texas legislature after Heman Sweatt applied for admission to the University of Texas at Austin law school. It was located in Houston, Texas, and attended mostly by African Americans. By 1960 it grown to be one of the largest African American schools in the country.

thought maybe the Black Muslims had a better solution. "[T]he YWCA," Anderson wrote, "is literally fighting to help her retain her faith in humanity."[62]

Campus climates varied considerably within other states as well. In 1961, the Y's survey of college campuses in Oklahoma revealed a wide disparity in terms of the treatment of African-American students, and administrative approaches to integration. At Tulsa University, a private school with token desegregation, there were two dormitories on campus – one for white men, the other for white women. The student body consisted of 3,000 students, 200 international and 50 black students. African Americans were housed separately, and were barred from participating in athletics. Students reported that a conservative administration and conservative Greek societies dominated the campus, and when a chaplain expressed liberal views, he was fired.

The picture was somewhat brighter at Central State, a desegregated, state-supported college in Edmond, Oklahoma, with 4500 students. There, athletics, dormitories, and all facilities on campus were integrated. A black student served in the Student Senate, and another was elected homecoming queen.[63] Langston College, in Langston, Oklahoma, was a state supported formerly all-black university with only one white student and two international students (from Africa) on campus. These three were "completely integrated into the life of the campus," although a restaurant in a nearby town refused to serve the international student from Ghana.

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62 Ibid., 14-15.

63 "Minutes – Frontiers in Race Relations Committee of the Southwest Regional Council of Student YMCA and YWCA," November 3-5, 1961, Kiwanis "Y" Camp, Dallas, Texas, *YWCA Collection*, Reel 311, Sophia Smith Collection, Neilson Library, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

In 1961, the largest state school, Oklahoma State University, enrolled approximately 11,000 students, only 50 of whom were African-American. OSU also hosted some 450 international students during the 1961 school year. Oklahoma State Y delegates reported that there was greater awareness of the needs of the international students than of the black students, but also that the international students were "not accepted socially at all." They described the black community in Stillwater as "apathetic," but (somewhat paradoxically) that black students were fully accepted on campus "because of the small number." Most of the community churches, restaurants, and theaters in Stillwater were nominally desegregated. Black students were accepted as members of the Student Y, and OSU fraternities had recently changed the wording of those eligible to receive bids from "white" to "socially acceptable." (In practice, of course, this did nothing to desegregate OSU's all-white fraternity system.) The most encouraging development was the formation of a human relations committee on OSU's campus, which was to be advised by faculty member and Freedom Ride veteran, Reverend John Dior.[64]

The exchanges that took place at the Y's regional workshops helped the Y's student-activists cope with feelings of isolation, and allow them to be part of a larger, intercollegiate community of progressive youth. These meetings were also vital for the sharing of intelligence – students often compared notes on the retaliatory measures taken by their respective school officials against them, and advised each other on how best to cope with them. In 1961, University of Texas student Vivienne Franklin, the YWCA Regional Council Chairman, spoke to a regional Y meeting about effective civil rights

64 Ibid.

organizing techniques gleaned from her experience as a leader in the UT-Austin Students for Direct Action, the group responsible for the demonstrations that led to the integration of theaters on the "Drag," a popular strip of restaurants, stores, and bars near the UT campus.[65] Franklin emphasized that direct action was "adult work," and that students needed to use it judiciously. It was important to select opportunities for direct action that were vulnerable to "attack." Targeting churches for student action, for instance, was generally less effective than targeting restaurants or theaters, where more livelihoods were directly at stake. She encouraged students to explore the best means to address issues individually, though she found that "[p]ublicity and economic coercion" were the most effective techniques.

Where possible, however, Franklin urged students to use other strategies in lieu of direct action – a philosophy in keeping with the conciliatory tradition of human relations work. In fact, she argued, it was "not valid to use direct action until all other means are exhausted – negotiation, petitions, working with adults, etc." Even when all efforts to negotiate the desegregation of a business proved unsuccessful, students ought to be very deliberate about escalating to the use of direct action techniques like sit-ins. As Franklin put it, "[i]f the movement runs into a dead-end, sit down and hash out exactly what the next move must be…."[66]

The Y regional human relations group which Franklin developed into an increasingly stable, intimate, and experienced group over the course of the early 1960s,

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65 At the time of this conference, Students for Direct Action had begun to conduct "read ins" in which students stood by the tower and read the scripture engraved on the building, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." Ibid.

66 Ibid.

was meeting one weekend every few months. During one of these meetings at Bishop College in Dallas in February 1962, the twenty-five students and project staff toured the city and enjoyed tea together at the Zodiac Room at Neiman-Marcus with "no difficulties." When they attempted to see the view from the Observation Tower at the Southland Life Center however, the group was rebuffed. They discussed these experiences together over dinner at SMU, and wrote a letter of protest to the Southland Life Center.

Larry Manire, the student chairman of the group at the time, explained at one of the group's meetings that it had "achieved uniqueness, a quality of relationships, that should be possible in normal, everyday experience." It was important to remember, Manire reminded them, that their group "is but a needle in a haystack; and that our goal should be to make such experiences as this a part of the pattern of society – not an isolated experience."[67] In a manner reminiscent of the NSA Southern Student Human Relations Seminars, the Y enabled youth to participate in normal, everyday activities as an interracial group, dispelling fears and motivating action in the process.

Analyzing the Southwest, Anderson identified a "frontier quality" that affected attitudes – for good and ill - in Oklahoma, Texas, and Arkansas, in that order. Oklahoma had made the most progress in race relations, but the regionally ingrained political emphasis on the individual also meant that that region's social welfare system was underdeveloped. Little had been done to ameliorate the economic dislocation created by

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67 Several students expressed their appreciation for their transformative experiences in the Southwest Frontiers in Race Relations Committee. Mary Woody, from Central State College wrote that, "It is only through new understandings that we can go forward to accomplish our goals. It may have seemed a step backward for the Committee to start out at such an elementary level but now I feel that by doing so we were enabled later on to take giant steps forward." Ibid.

the transformation from farming to oil and gas production. But that very uncertainty also created opportunities that did not exist in less dynamic local economies. Arkansas state officials, for instance, were particularly eager to attract new business to the state, and their sensitivity to negative national press helped grassroots organizations like the Women's Emergency Corps defeat the "Faubus amendment," which would have allowed Governor Orval Faubus to close public schools to avoid integration.

The Student YWCA noted general progress in Oklahoma among public colleges, though private colleges lagged way behind. In Texas, African American schools from which courageous students had emerged as leaders of sit-in demonstrations, such as Bishop and Wiley College, paid a heavy price in the years that followed. The relative isolation of blacks and whites in Marshall after the demonstrations remained, in Edna Anderson's "absolute."[68] The town's banks called in their loans to those institutions, forcing them to operate on a cash-only basis. Faculty went without pay for several months, and administrators tightened up restrictions on students.

Special Project staff Edna Anderson helped the Bishop College Y in Dallas to organize a joint workshop with the United Church Women of Texas on the topic, "Concerns of Women in a Changing Society." Although nine white women including

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68 The Southwest Project director, Edna Anderson described her visit: "It was something of a shock even to this writer - a Texan - on her first visit to Marshall, Texas, to learn of the absoluteness of the isolation suffered by the two Negro colleges there. Practically the only contact through the years had been that required of the community to enjoy the economic benefits derived from the two institutions After the sit-is of 1960 by Bishop and Wiley students, even these relationships were reduced….." Edna T. Anderson and Ella J. Baker, "Report to the Field Foundation on the Special Project in Human Relations, Sponsored by the College and University Division National Board Young Women's Christian Association, September 1, 1960-August 31, 1960," 26. *YWCA Collection*, Reel 311, Sophia Smith Collection, Neilson Library, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

four students from nearby Centenary College, did attend, all but one of the women from the local Marshall chapter of the United Church Women backed out at the last moment, even though several of them had served as official observers of student sit-in trials in 1960. Project director Edna Anderson noted that although no emphasis was planned on the difference in white or black women, and the only human relations aspect was the interracial nature of the gathering, in the charged racial atmosphere from just a year earlier, the perceived "threat to Marshall women was too great."[69] At Wiley College, the Student Y ceased to operate entirely in the wake of its activism, and both students and faculty alike spoke of feeling demoralized by their isolation. One faculty member remarked to Anderson, "If I did not have someone like you to talk with once in a while, I would go completely crazy."[70]

Meanwhile, Ella Baker pursued potential for meaningful human relations work in her Southeast region, which contained 129 campus Ys, 82 of them at "predominately white" colleges, and 47 at black schools. Only a handful of Student Ys were interracial in 1961, however, as most schools in the region remained completely segregated, with the exception of the flagship state schools of North Carolina, Virginia, and Kentucky.[71]

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69 Ibid., 19

70 Edna T. Anderson and Ella J. Baker, "Report to the Field Foundation on the Special Project in Human Relations," Sponsored by the College and University Division National Board Young Women's Christian Association, September 1, 1961-August 31, 1962, 16. *YWCA Collection*, Reel 311, Sophia Smith Collection, Neilson Library, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

71 Baker identified these exceptions: the Universities of North Carolina and Virginia, where "de facto integration" existed, and historically black colleges like Bennett College in Greensboro and Spelman College in Atlanta, where white exchange students studied also. Also, she described the University of Kentucky and Berea College Student Y's as "relatively well integrated." Edna T. Anderson and Ella J. Baker, "Report to the Field Foundation on the Special Project in Human

Baker reported that only 7% of school districts in the region had undertaken even token desegregation since the 1954 *Brown* decision, but she was hopeful that the extensive education and preparatory work by several organizations would make for a smooth process of desegregation in the city of Atlanta.[72]

At the college level, the University of Tennessee, the University of Miami, and a few other schools had begun tentative efforts to desegregate, but as elsewhere, private institutions continued to lag behind.[73] The states of the "deep South," including Alabama, Mississippi, and South Carolina, continued to form a seemingly impregnable bastion of college segregation, the only two exceptions being Spring Hill, a Jesuit college in Alabama, and St. Augustine Catholic Seminary in Mississippi.

CAMPUS TRAVELERS

The sit-ins, Baker observed, had created a real opportunity for human relations work in the South, which she regarded as necessary to the success of the movement. Student direct action, she wrote, had "precipitated changes at a rate not previously believed to be possible," and, as a consequence, "new vistas for both white and Negro

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Relations, Sponsored by the College and University Division National Board Young Women's Christian Association, September 1, 1960-August 31, 1961," 35. *YWCA Collection*, Reel 311, Sophia Smith Collection, Neilson Library, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

72 Baker noted that the number of black students assigned to white schools in Charlotte, North Carolina had actually decreased since the decision. Ibid, 34.

73 Baker observed, "But the irony is that the possible loss of large grants reportedly weighed heavily in [Duke University's] decision. Even more ironical, Davidson registered interest in having Congolese students while still excluding American Negroes." Ibid, 36.

students, in particular, have been opened up." Baker described the changes in Southern students:

> The Negro student gained a new image of himself and the white student recognized that the South's devotion to an outmoded way of life was preventing him from being an integral part of a worldwide social revolution led by his peers. Perhaps, more than any single factor this stimulation of the desires and determination of students to relate to each other as persons will provide the seedbed for genuine human relations in the South.

The primary objective of the Special Project was to "help YWCA members carry increasing responsibility for changing racial patterns in the university (in both academic and extracurricular aspects) in the community and the region."[74] Recognizing that social change was taking place in the South primarily as a result of student action, networks, and relationships, Baker determined that the best way to further the Special Project's aims was to hire a "young traveler" to facilitate peer relationships in her region. Originally, Baker sought a white person for this position, for the practical reasons that she would be able to cover more ground, and go places where "Negro staff members were not yet accepted."[75] The "campus traveler" would act as a liaison between the campus YWCAs and the regional Y staff. In Baker's mind, the ideal candidate for such a position would be a young white woman recently graduated from college, and a proven facilitator of dialogue and a role model who students could easily relate to and trust.

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74 Ella Baker, *Report for the Southeastern Region*, in Edna T. Anderson and Ella J. Baker, "Report to the Field Foundation on the Special Project in Human Relations," Sponsored by the College and University Division National Board Young Women's Christian Association, September 1, 1961-August 31, 1962, 34. *YWCA Collection*, Reel 311, Sophia Smith Collection, Neilson Library, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

75 Ibid.

Baker sought someone "who had arrived a point of commitment through experience; who was firm in her convictions, but sufficiently accepting to work with people at their own levels, especially students whose outlook and experience were underdeveloped."[76]

Baker hired Casey Hayden, a veteran of the student demonstrations in Austin, and a longtime YWCA member. Hayden wasted no time before hitting the road. During the academic year of 1961-1962, Hayden traveled to 27 campuses in South Carolina, Tennessee, and North Carolina, seeking to spark dialogues with students on human relations. By 1961, the term "human relations" had lost all pretense of meaning anything other than "race relations" in the minds of most southerners, and few school administrators reacted warmly to the thought of open dialogues about race on their campuses. So instead of "human relations," Hayden spoke about "academic freedom," explaining her presence on Southern colleges as an attempt to monitor and compare the degrees of academic freedom she found on various campuses across the region. When visiting whites-only campuses, Hayden quickly learned to keep a low profile, and typically spoke only to small groups of students at YM/YWCA gatherings. On black campuses, Hayden knew that she could generally expect a far more public welcome, and she was often invited to address entire student bodies. The marked difference in treatment bothered her.[77]

In both settings, however, Hayden recruited interested students to interracial workshops, giving students in some of the most isolated areas of the South an opportunity to meet with one another on an equal basis. YWCA advisors Ella Baker and Rosetta Gardner believed that an overriding goal of the human relations project must be to "help

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76 Ibid, 33.

77 Hayden, "Fields of Blue," 344.

Southern whites to know educated black counterparts in the same town and develop genuine relationships with them as human beings."[78] For many white students "trapped in the cage of race," Hayden recalled, "these workshops were a way out."[79] These meetings supported SNCC efforts in the South, as the workshops connected some black students who were already involved with the movement with other like-minded students.

In addition to speaking on southern campuses, Hayden and Baker guided interracial workshops at "centers that have potential for sustained intercollegiate relationships."[80] They conducted a workshop in Maryville, Tennessee, titled, "The Role of Students in the Changing South," during which they led discussion groups on the church, education, voting, political action, and on the impact of the student protest movement. The Marysville workshop drew 91 attendees, an astounding number given the era. Ella Baker also teamed up with Hayden to organize a similar workshop at Lane College in Jackson, Tennessee, this time presenting to 65 local students on the "Factors Blocking Social Change and How to Deal With Them." They used readings such as C. Vann Woodward's "The Search for Southern Identity" and other essays to inform and fuel the dialogue.[81]

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78 King, *Freedom Song*, 67.

79 Hayden, "Fields of Blue," 344–345.

80 Ella Baker, *Report for the Southeastern Region*, in Edna T. Anderson and Ella J. Baker, "Report to the Field Foundation on the Special Project in Human Relations," Sponsored by the College and University Division National Board Young Women's Christian Association, September 1, 1961-August 31, 1962, 38. *YWCA Collection*, Reel 311, Sophia Smith Collection, Neilson Library, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

81 Ibid., 41.

Student participants of these workshops came from varied backgrounds, and often had vastly different levels of experience in the realm of "race relations." While some reported having helped register blacks to vote in Florida and elsewhere, others admitted that their interracial experience did not extend much farther than sending old books to students in Hong Kong.[82] These differences did not matter to Baker and Hayden, as all of them were united by a common reality of enforced silence in the face of racial segregation and injustice. A student from a segregated white college in South Carolina spoke for many when she conceded that "[f]ree and open discussion of racial problems is not easy on our campus."[83]

When assessing the quality and effectiveness of these efforts, Baker and Hayden drew distinctions between those students who clung to a "'Thanksgiving or Christmas basket for the poor' attitude," and those who were genuinely prepared to change how they lived and interacted with others on a daily basis. Indeed, the pair were often able to facilitate extremely candid dialogues on the subject of race. At one such YMCA/YWCA summer meeting in 1962, 33 students in a human relations workshop discussed the kinds of misunderstandings that could take place in these novel, interracial contexts. After Baker encouraged the students to speak openly, the conversation turned to a specific incident in which a white female student declined to dance with a black male student. Recognizing that there might be reasons, aside from race, why the woman may have refused the young man's invitation, they students discussed how race complicated the scenario. Similarly, one black female student acknowledged feeling "all funny inside" when asked to dance by a white student. Baker highlighted the example "to demonstrate

82 Ibid., 41.

83 Ibid., 54.

how the overtones of race can exaggerate the significance of an ordinary human encounter." The examples of these interpersonal miscommunications, Baker later observed, helped the students conceptualize "how the lack of honest communication between Negroes and whites warped the perspectives of both and us and the entire nation."[84]

Baker exhorted white students to stand up for *their own* academic freedom, and "to do for white Southern schools what the Negro students had done for civil rights."[85] She knew that southern white students faced intense parental, peer, and administrative pressure to remain silent on the issue of race. Baker recognized the courage of those who were willing to stand up to the forces behind the South's racial status quo. For those who wavered about whether or how they should join the struggle, Baker reminded them that there were many roles to play, and many avenues into the struggle. At a 1962 conference in Columbia, South Carolina, and later at two conferences at the Highlander Center in Tennessee, Baker offered specific guidance to white students on their part in the integration process. The students, Baker reassured them, ought not feel guilty for not having "put their bodies on the line." And there were indeed consequences to standing up for racial justice. But, she said, simply by sharing their awareness of how segregation undermined both whites and blacks in the South, the students had more power than they knew to change the way others—from their peers to their parents—thought about race.[86]

For his ability to lend further support to white racially progressive students, Baker recruited her friend and Spelman College history professor Howard Zinn as an advisor to

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84 Ibid., 49-50.

85 Joanne Grant, *Ella Baker: Freedom Bound* (New York: Wiley, 1998), 151.

86 Ibid., 150–151.

the Special Project. A white World War II veteran originally from Brooklyn, Zinn first met Ella Baker through their common involvement with the newly formed SNCC. Zinn became an enthusiastic supporter of the project, and joined Baker in facilitating interracial student gatherings and conferences sponsored by the YWCA.[87]

Zinn's thinking about race in the American South reflected the influence of social psychology, human relations, and psychology—particularly "group dynamics." Emerging scholarship in psychosocial "field theory," he believed, suggested that the racial attitudes of Southern whites' were a "response to a group atmosphere," and were thus "susceptible to manipulation."[88] He argued that the "universal detergent for race prejudice is *contact* – massive, prolonged, equal, and intimate."[89]

As an observer and participant in the student movement in Atlanta, Zinn was among the earliest of his generation to recognize the transformative potential of student exchanges – both within the United States and internationally. He often highlighted the international experiences of various Southern black student movement leaders, noting that "[t]he tame-sounding phrase "cultural exchange," had begun to have revolutionary implications."[90]

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87 Baker took the YWCA position in order to work with SNCC activists in the South.

88 Howard Zinn, *The Southern Mystique* (New York: Knopf, 1964), 28. Zinn based his thinking on research in group dynamics by Kurt Lewin in *Field Theory in Social Science* (Harper, 1951) and Dorwin Cartwright in "Achieving Change in People," (*Human Relations*, 1951).

89 Ibid., 93.

90 Ibid., 119–120. Zinn pointed out the influence of international contacts on the student movement, highlighting the experiences of some student leaders: "Marian Wright, from Bennettsville, South Carolina, had spent a year in Geneva as a Merrill Scholar studying international relations and a summer in Soviet Russia. The Atlanta student who helped draft The Appeal on Human Rights [published in

In 1962, Baker further expanded the Special Project, by replacing the outgoing Casey Hayden with two new campus travelers, who would continue to spread the Y's message of racial exchange to campuses across the South. Hayden herself was bound for Ann Arbor, where her husband Tom Hayden was about to begin graduate school at the University of Michigan, where he would soon write the iconic Port Huron Statement, and help found Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). But during her brief tenure, Baker wrote, Hayden had already succeeding in making "the image of the YWCA undoubtedly…more attractive to many students." A number of Y chapters had launched their own pilot programs in human relations as a direct result of her campus visits.[91]

To replace her, Baker and Rosetta Gardner, the student Y's southern regional coordinator, selected Mary King, a young, white graduate of Ohio Wesleyan University, and Bobbi Yancy, an African American graduate of Barnard College. Rosetta Gardner had met Mary King the previous year, when Ohio Wesleyan's Student Y chapter had sponsored a "study tour" for its students of major human relations programs and figures in the South.[92] During the interview process, Baker, Zinn, and Gardner stressed that King

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the Atlanta Constitution after the Greensboro sit-ins], Rosyln Pope, had just returned from a year studying music in Paris. Under the auspices of nationalist leader Tom Mboya, a small group of young African women flew from Kenya to enroll at Spelman."

91 Ella Baker, *Report for the Southeastern Region*, in Edna T. Anderson and Ella J. Baker, "Report to the Field Foundation on the Special Project in Human Relations," Sponsored by the College and University Division National Board Young Women's Christian Association, September 1, 1961-August 31, 1962, 38. *YWCA Collection*, Reel 311, Sophia Smith Collection, Neilson Library, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

92 This 1962 Easter break was life-changing experience for King, as she met white and black students from universities in Nashville and Atlanta, city officials, newsman, and members of SCLS, SNCC, and Baker and Hayden of the Southern Student

and Yancy would be assuming personal danger by taking the jobs, and traveling around the South together. The warning swayed neither of the women, and both readily accepted the challenge.[93]

Similar to Hayden just a year earlier, King and Yancy received most of their training while on-the-job. They found, for instance, that they were rarely able to speak at white campuses at the same time. More often, they traveled to a town together, and Yancy spoke at the black schools, while King spoke at the white schools. But on one occasion, they spoke together at an all-white school, Queens College in Charlotte, North Carolina. They later reported to the Field Foundation that the Queens College students had shown a surprising level of interest in human relations. They had, for instance, formed a "Committee to Study Integration" in response to the violence following James Meredith's enrollment at the University of Mississippi earlier in the year. After speaking to three sociology classes and an informal student group, one student told them, "You probably don't realize this, but your coming on campus together means more than six speeches made separately. It is too bad you have to work separately most of the time."[94]

Over time, King and Yancy developed a basic routine for planning their campus visits. After calling on the faculty advisor of the Student YWCA at a prospective college, they would contact a dean or administrator. They typically arranged to speak at the Campus Ys, or in student chapels, where attendance was mandatory. Though they spoke on academic freedom, King recalled that she would include enough references to

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YWCA. King, *Freedom Song: A Personal Story of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement*, 33–38.

93 Fortunately neither was physically harmed, although they did not always feel safe.

94 King, *Freedom Song*, 64.

segregation that her words "acted like a dragnet." Those students and faculty who were interested in integration would usually stay to speak with her afterwards. She would make sure to introduce interested students to one another, and often invited them to interracial regional conferences or gatherings at nearby schools.[95] But, King recalled, "it wasn't often that I could suggest that a group from a white campus start meeting with black students and faculty from a nearby college because it was too dangerous."

The few interracial meetings that did take place in the South during the early 1960s were generally held at black colleges, and at night, so that white students who attended would not attract hostile attention. Interracial meetings on white campuses were out of the question in most cases. To attempt such a meeting at a segregated white school, King wrote, "would have resulted in physical violence and arrests. Arrests meant expulsion from school."[96]

Their work was difficult, frustrating, and fraught with risk. Hayden had warned King that in her experience, the state of academic freedom on most Southern campuses was "appalling." Professors avoided even oblique references to racial issues for fear of being labeled a communist, and students who questioned segregation risked ostracism and even expulsion. And while "academic freedom" served admirably as a pretext for their campus visits, King and Yancy's experiences generally confirmed Hayden's characterization.[97] At one college, the two travelers reported, professors ducked their

95 Ibid., 66.

96 Ibid., 67.

97 King writes of several encounters that confirm the level of fear present on college campuses among faculty who were hesitant to even have discussions about race or segregation. She observed one professor who, when asked by a student in his sociology class if segregation in education wasn't an unnecessary financial burden for the state, declined to answer the question at all.

direct questions about racial issues on campus by saying, "I'm sorry, we cannot talk about that."[98] Some campus YWCAs were under too much scrutiny and pressure from the local community to even host the two women safely. In Jackson, Mississippi, for example, King and Yancy hoped to organize an "underground" interracial group of Millsaps and Jackson State students. But the police followed the pair constantly, and then pursued them individually when they split up. Intimidated by the show of official force, Millsaps Y staff worried about possible retaliation, even when Yancy and King left. There was some precedent that justified the school's concerns. Millsaps students in the 1950s engaged in intercollegiate activities with Tougaloo College students, but a Mississippi legislative investigation after an interracial event at Millsaps in 1958 curtailed such activities. When Ella Baker visited the campus in 1960, she found that Millsaps' former "progressive force in matters of human relations has been replaced by what might be termed a tightrope act of trying 'to protect academic freedom without incurring legislative wrath.'"[99]

The Y's campus travelers met with this "oppressive" atmosphere more often than not in the South, regardless of whether they were visiting at white or black colleges. A

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98 Edna T. Anderson and Ella J. Baker, "Report to the Field Foundation on the Special Project in Human Relations," Sponsored by the College and University Division National Board Young Women's Christian Association, September 1, 1961-August 31, 1962, 25. *YWCA Collection*, Reel 311, Sophia Smith Collection, Neilson Library, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

99 Baker noted that "Students are courteous and polite, but without depth in discussing any topic; and the question of race is a never never land." Edna T. Anderson and Ella J. Baker, "Report to the Field Foundation on the Special Project in Human Relations, Sponsored by the College and University Division National Board Young Women's Christian Association, September 1, 1960-August 31, 1961," 44-45. *YWCA Collection*, Reel 311, Sophia Smith Collection, Neilson Library, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

year after her work with the Y project, Yancy wrote that she had traveled South to "join the ranks of the rebellious" in the movement. She recalled thinking that as a life-long Northerner, it made sense to "spend a little time looking and listening," when she first came to the region, but concluded that "there was not much to hear on most Southern campuses."[100] Indeed, most students found their inspiration to get involved not on campus, but elsewhere.

The YWCA was pivotal in this regard, providing rare off-campus interracial gatherings. Mary King recalled a conversation with the faculty sponsor of the Student Y at Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, the largest black college in the country. Of Southern's 5,000 students, 200 had participated in sit-ins in 1961. Dependent on funding from the conservative white Louisiana legislature, the school subsequently expelled a number of the student demonstration leaders.[101] Among those expelled were Java Thompson, one of Southern's top female scholars and the 1960-1961 president of the Student YWCA Southern Regional Council, and D'Army Bailey, a 1961 NSA Southern Student Human Relations Seminar participant. Bailey's official notice of expulsion from Southern explained that his dismissal was due to his "failure to adjust to university life," even though Bailey was by then a junior with top grades, as well as a

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100 Roberta Yancy and Staughton Lynd, "The Unfamiliar Campus - Southern Negro Students: The College and the Movement," *Dissent* 11, no. 1 (January 1964): 44. When the human relations funding ran out in 1963, Yancy became the Campus Coordinator for SNCC (Lynd served as faculty advisor to SNCC's freedom schools).

101 For a detailed account of the sit-ins and demonstrations by Southern students, including the expulsion of many student leaders by the conservative black administration at a historically black college, see the account of D'Army Bailey, who participated in the NSA Southern Student Human Relations Project in 1963. Bailey and Easson, *The Education of a Black Radical*.

respected student leader.[102] The African American YWCA faculty sponsor chastised King about the YWCA's efforts to "stir up young people." Students like Java Thompson, the professor claimed, had gone to "one of those big Y meetings last year and c[o]me back filled with ideas about the sit-in movement." The way this faculty member perceived it, the Y had manipulated Thompson through her naiveté and idealism—and had ultimately cost her an education.[103] These reactions to the Y's efforts were fairly common among the older generation of African American professors and staff at black colleges and universities in the South.

In addition to campus visits and arranging for quiet interracial meetings in local communities, King and Yancy circulated a newsletter called "Notes From the South," in which they detailed student efforts for racial equality in the region.[104] In between their campus travels, they arranged regional workshops for face-to face interaction among handpicked students from the campuses they had already visited. They convened students from nine black and white colleges in the Atlanta area, organized workshops on voter registration, tutoring programs, and fair housing in Gatlinburg, Tennessee, and held human relations programs in Maryville, Tennessee, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Duke University, and Memphis State University.[105] These efforts brought

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102 Southern University to D'Army Bailey,1961. *YWCA Collection*, Reel 311, Sophia Smith Collection, Neilson Library, Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts.

103 King, *Freedom Song*, 64.

104 King notes that the title of their newsletter "now has the ring of a report from a foreign country; indeed there was a sense of alienation from the rest of the country felt by many enlightened blacks and whites throughout the region then." Ibid., 66.

105 At Memphis State, their workshop featured the theme "The Search for Southern Identity."

together black and white students who wanted desperately to become involved, and who wanted "a way out," as Hayden put it, of the isolation they experienced in the racial regime of the South. One white female student from Duke wrote a note of thanks to Ella Baker for easing her worries and confusion about criticizing segregation, and helping her find manageable ways of contributing to the larger Freedom Movement.[106] Students from Memphis State were so inspired by Baker that they invited her to speak at their commencement. Baker accepted, becoming the first African American to address the school's graduating class.

In 1962, Ella Baker described the patient but deliberate cultivation process that she employed during her work with the students on the YWCA Human Relations project. She outlined three distinct phases, using the metaphors of farming to describe how the Special Project sought to cultivate resistance to segregation in the South. The first step was to the sow the "seed" of racial inclusiveness by facilitating "genuine human encounter across the divisive barriers of race and class" despite the unfavorable environment for such interactions. These initial face-to-face experiences through workshops and gatherings emboldened students to look inward, and to develop their own convictions regarding the injustice of the southern racial regime. From these initial efforts also came a newfound sense of political awareness, and a heightened will to address the injustice.

The next step was "the blade," or ploughing process, during which the women the Y initiated projects in their communities, or direct action demonstrations such as sit-ins

106 *Report on the Special Project on Human Relations*, August 1, 1960, *YWCA Collection*, Sophia Smith Collection, Neilson Library, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

or pickets. These were the first concrete steps to indicate that "gains are being made." Finally, Baker wrote, "the full corn appears," when young peoples' sustained commitment and activism rendered tangible results that suggested a trend of future human relations successes.[107] Another aspect of this process was "cross-fertilization," meaning, to draw in students from campuses in the region that had no YWCA. This took place at the Maryville, Tennessee, workshop, where the largest delegation came from Tusculum College, a college with no Y presence. As result of the workshop, five students from Southwestern College at Memphis, which also had no Y, invited Ella Baker to speak to the chapel convocation at their college on May 11, 1962. Some of the faculty expressed misgivings about the invitation, but Baker spoke anyway, subsequently receiving many letters of appreciation from white students.

One letter spoke of the universal "amazement" of the campus that an African American could speak so eloquently. The writer admitted, "This was my reaction the first time I ever heard a Negro speak, too. It is the lack of contact which makes this discovery so infrequent which we must work to overcome first." Another letter of thanks acknowledged that many of the students disagreed with her views. "We have students from McComb, Montgomery, and Baton Rouge, and it is hard for them to face the facts that their fathers and their fathers' friends are engaged in racial discrimination of the most unjust nature. But hearing the other side made these students face the ideas with which they grew up and that is indeed a good first step."[108] Baker wrote to the Field Foundation

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107 Ella Baker, *Report for the Southeastern Region*, September 1, 1961, 62, *YWCA Collection*, Sophia Smith Collection, Neilson Library, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

108 Ella Baker, *Report for the Southeastern Region*, in Edna T. Anderson and Ella J. Baker, "Report to the Field Foundation on the Special Project in Human

that these experiences gave her hope for the future, since "we in the South continue to work on the premise that every seed holds the promise of harvest."[109]

Baker also brought to the YWCA a critical perspective of the ways that institutions could foster - and inhibit - interracial understanding and concrete action toward racial equality. She was not an "organization woman," but rather, a committed and tactically flexible activist who used practical methods to support the student movement. In the summer of 1962, she shared her candid observations about her human relations work in the South with the National Student YWCA staff in New York City. Though religious denominations were on record as supporting racial equality, church-affiliated schools in the region were deliberately dragging their feet in the area of human relations.

The national YWCA, Baker stressed, had more work to do as well. "With few exceptions," Baker said, the YWCA presented an image "to the young students in the South" that "is not the kind of image which would stimulate them to move ahead in new and creative ways."[110] YWCA membership was automatically conferred with admission

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Relations," Sponsored by the College and University Division National Board Young Women's Christian Association, September 1, 1961-August 31, 1962, 63. *YWCA Collection*, Reel 311, Sophia Smith Collection, Neilson Library, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

109 Baker concluded, "The implied factors of growth which must intervene between seed time and harvest in plant life find symbolic kinship with the step-by-step, year-by-year human relations efforts of the National Student YWCA in the South. Thus, 'seed and soil,' 'climate and season' demand as much concern and attention in the development of meaningful human relations programs in the region as are required in the cultivation and production of a good crop of corn or cotton."

110 Minutes of the National Student YWCA Administrative Committee, June 1, 1962. *YWCA Collection*, Box 743, Folder 3, Sophia Smith Collection, Neilson Library, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

at some universities, rendering it virtually meaningless because it was officially sanctioned and controlled by often-conservative university administrators. Still, the YWCA's broad recognition and public image of political moderation often acted as a blessing as well. SNCC worker Lawrence Guyot remembered that Baker provided YMCA and YWCA identification cards to young people who traveled South to work in the movement, in case they were stopped by local police suspicious of outsiders.[111]

Baker criticized the YWCA for not acting more stridently to encourage student participation in the Freedom Movement. "The YWCA has asked too many questions; they have been good questions but once the YWCA has asked the questions, it has almost accepted that as being the answer." The organization must cease being satisfied with gathering information and begin actively promoting solutions if it was "going to have a cutting edge." Further, while financially supporting those organizations more directly involved with the Southern freedom movement helped, she noted, the YWCA "will fail the young people of the South if it does not provide for some real action."[112]

One such form of "real action" was to register black southerners to vote—an effort for which her human relations staff both recruited volunteers, and contributed to themselves. Due in part to their efforts, southern voter registration projects soon had more volunteers than they could use. Baker viewed the YWCA to be in the unique position to capitalize on the interest in these programs. Few of the students who

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111 Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement*, 260.

112 Baker also praised the YWCA's "Project Tomorrow," a newly created initiative to provide financial funds and projects to support the student movement for racial quality nationwide, not just in the South. Minutes of the National Student YWCA Administrative Committee, June 1, 1962. *YWCA Collection*, Box 743, Folder 3, Sophia Smith Collection, Neilson Library, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

participated in the YWCA human relations activities had previously participated in direct action, but, as Edna Anderson noted, "they, like their colleagues in the Movement, are more interested in a change in behavior than a change in attitude. They have wanted to know what the societal factors are which segregate and/or prevent the Negro from attaining first-class citizenship."[113]

CONCLUSION

The YWCA was connected with nearly every aspect of the student movement. Students within the organization provided important contributions to the struggle for racial, gender, and human equality. Mary King, who served as Y Special Project intern, reflected in her autobiography on the importance of the YWCA in the development of her activism within the movement:

> The telephone call from Atlanta in June 1962…was in retrospect even more significant for me than the fact that it provided the conduit for me subsequently to work for SNCC. The YWCA human-relations project, as it turned out, also exposed me at a crucial juncture to an international organization run entirely by women.
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> Thus it was that both Casey Hayden and I came into the civil rights movement through a completely female-led organization, one whose purpose was leadership development for women and girls. We saw the whole YWCA at work, from the policy-setting national governing board to the Southern regional campus division, or, as it was called, the "Student Y." The National Student YWCA, one segment

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113 Edna T. Anderson and Ella J. Baker, "Report to the Field Foundation on the Special Project in Human Relations," Sponsored by the College and University Division National Board Young Women's Christian Association, September 1, 1961-August 31, 1962, 21. *YWCA Collection*, Reel 311, Sophia Smith Collection, Neilson Library, Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts.

> of the large domestic organization, was more enlightened and progressive than its male counterpart, and it was entirely led by women.[114]

This woman-led organization devoted to the practice of human relations and the pursuit of racial equality did not seek publicity or credit for the work it performed. The words "background," "quiet," and "determined," appear with regularity in descriptions of YWCA practitioners, including Ella Baker, and Rosalie Oakes before her. They embodied a "group-centered" leadership style focused less on themselves and more about empowering others and building community. For the women students who came of age in the postwar South, these role models shaped their notions of womanhood, and the meaning of activism, leadership, and teaching. Baker constantly asked questions that prodded students to form their own interpretations, and for the group to reach a consensus on courses of action. Lenora Taitt-Magubane, whose activism began with the Spelman YWCA, and Mary King similarly recall the "nondirective approach" that Baker applied in her work with students. [115] "We called it 'the Y's way to work,'" Hayden said later, but of course we meant that as a play on words, too. It was truly the wise way to work."[116] The "Y's way to work" was collaborative, participatory, and democratic. Like American ideals of equality and freedom, the high standards of racial equality that the women of the YWCA set were rarely met in practice, but those among them who committed to their realization made a tremendous difference.

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114 King, *Freedom Song*, 60–61.

115 Ibid., 359–360. Others with similar recollections include Diane Nash and Prathia Hall, Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement*, 360.

116 Ford, "Quiet Chamption for Civil Rights: Memorial Planned for Activist Rosalie Oakes."

It is difficult to quantify the impact of the YWCA Special Project on Human Relations in the South, since the impact of their work was rarely immediate, and difficult to assess. It was not meant to be direct action, although, as Mary King recalls, "in those days, two young professional women, one white and one black, traveling together by bus, train, and airplane in the South for any purpose, represented a head-on conflict with legalized segregation."[117] A major contribution of the YWCA student movement, however, was to cultivate both white and black leadership. During the 1960-1961 year, Special Project staff made 63 visits to campus associations, and engaged over 500 students at a dozen human relations workshops in the region. Moreover, once project staff helped students at a local association to plan and orchestrate an event, student leaders in the chapter were more likely to plan future gatherings and to initiate action in the community. The Project post-dated the 1960 sit-ins, which made direct action and "putting your body on the line" the defining mode of activism in the student movement. Moreover, in successive years it broadened in scope, incorporating work in Latino migrant camps in Dallas, hosting conferences on the relationship of housing and jobs to poverty, and engaging high school age women to participate in pre-college programs. The YWCA endeavors in human relations suggest that other kinds of activities – not typically considered activism - took place among students, the importance of which has not received the attention it deserves. We cannot understand the freedom movement if we do not fully understand why people joined it. When segregation banned interracial gatherings, and yet black and white students sought out opportunities to meet together, despite law and custom, the "how" that brought students to the decision to act is

117 King, *Freedom Song*, 49.

important. The conditions and structures, people and institutions, and the personal work that supported even a small minority of students who decided to defy tradition and convention sheds new light on the mechanics of social change.

Epilogue

On May 1, 1960, black and white students from the University of Texas YM/YWCA sat together and requested coffee at the segregated Renfro's Drug Store on Guadalupe Street.[1] Although initially rebuffed, the student protesters persisted in their efforts to integrate local Austin eateries. Many UT faculty members lauded the student's efforts, but others in the community were alarmed by the civil rights "agitation" pouring forth from a purported Christian organization whose constituency was UT students. The University Y was unorthodox and eclectic, serving as a student union to thousands of students who attended the lectures, discussion groups, and campus activities sponsored there each year. But the sit-ins questioned Austin's established social order in a public manner that prior activities had not, prompting renewed charges that the University Y had unwittingly devolved into a safe haven for communist ideas.[2] The bombing of the Y building in November of 1960 underscored the level of local resistance to the Y's activities.[3] Two years later, the *Dallas Morning News* attacked the Student Y in Austin

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1 This sit-in took place three months after the legendary Woolworth lunch counter sit-in in 1960 by four students in Greensboro, North Carolina. The Renfro sit-in was part of a weekend of planned sit-ins conducted by over 150 students in downtown Austin eateries. Students from the University of Texas, Huston-Tillotson College, Episcopal Seminary, and the Presbyterian Seminary participated.

2 Associating civil rights activists with communism was a favored tactic for opponents of racial integration, in part because Soviet Russia often featured similar critiques of American segregation in their propaganda efforts against the United States. Chapter 1 recounts the history of similar accusations against the Y in the postwar era.

3 The homemade bomb had been planted by two UT students while a group of integrationist student activists met inside. Because it landed in a stairwell, no one was hurt. The police reported that given the strength of the blast, however, the

in a series of articles questioning whether the organization could even be called "Christian." Conservative UT student leaders halted the student body's annual contributions to the Y in an attempt to reign in what many had come to see as an out-of-control student organization.[4]

Yet a closer look at postwar student activity at the University of Texas shows that for Y members, testing intellectual, social, political, geographic, and even economic limits was nothing new by 1960. Much of the history of the early postwar student efforts to oppose segregation has been overlooked altogether, or described as a temporary aberration. Yet there is more continuity to the history of youth activism in the South than contemporary newspaper headlines—and much of the historical scholarship of the era—might suggest. The interracial alliance that made the 1960 Greensboro sit-ins a tipping point in the Movement and American history had in fact taken years to build.

This dissertation examines the specific conditions, developments, and concerns that informed the perspective of students in the postwar era. I argue that significant

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bomb would likely have resulted in fatalities if it had struck the room where students met. Larry Thompson, "Integration Group Escapes 'Y' Bombing," *Daily Texan* (Austin, TX, November 30, 1960).

4 This decision came after a contentious debate and 9-4 vote of the Campus Chest committee. One of the Campus Chest co-chairmen, Michelle Puzin, resigned in protest before the vote took place, explaining, "Their objections were based on the fact that they wanted changes in the 'Y's program. The 'Y,' I feel, cannot revise a program which is basically sound." Another element to this debate concerned the central role of Greek organizations to the raising of Campus Chest funds. The other Campus Chest co-chairman, Johnny Musselman, described the annual Campus Chest student fundraising drive as "a Greek competition." Since the Y sponsored student groups that opposed racial restrictions, Campus Chest fund officers feared that contributions would suffer if the Y remained a primary recipient of the funds, as it had since 1944. Larry Lee, "Campus Chest Commitee Cuts 'Y' Off Annual Drive," *Daily Texan* (Austin, TX, October 18, 1962); Sam Kinch, "A Way Out," *Daily Texan* (Austin, TX, October 25, 1962).

student organizing took place during the 1940s and 1950s. During this time after World War II, an emphasis on international responsibility appears to have increasingly undermined traditional loyalties to local hierarchies and customs, even as the Cold War silenced many older activists. Although the 1950s are remembered as a decade of mainstream inactivity and conformity, students involved with the University Y as well as the National Student Association during that era did not fit this mold. They formed interracial organizations and friendships, defied mores and law, although oftentimes in a deliberately covert fashion. The changes in individual consciousness that took place after World War II, often through "human relations" work, fueled a growing coalition of young Southerners opposed to racial segregation. Postwar student leaders in the South fought over the meaning of freedom and individual rights, presaging the campus battles over academic freedom and free speech with which "student activism" would become synonymous decades later. From these early battles emerged the networks of students committed to social justice that would sustain the growing movement.

In 2009, historian Mary Ryan addressed the OAH on the future of women's history. Like most scholars, Ryan admitted that her research "is very much still bound to the time in which I came of age as a citizen and a historian."[5] Yet she challenged her colleagues to engage in "scrutiny of how gender meanings and feminist aspirations are passed between generations." Ryan asked, "What is lost, gained, and created at the transfer point between mothers and children, teachers and students, one generation of

5 Mary Ryan, "Is There a Future for Women's History? Beyond the Cycle of Revisionism" (Keynote address presented at the The OAH Committee on Women in the Historical Professsion Luncheon at the Organization of American Historians Annual Meeting, Seattle, WA, March 28, 2009). http://www.oah.org/pubs/nl/2009nov/ryan.html

historians and the next? The relations between the generations of feminists and women's historians are not seamless." This study is informed by similar questions about what is "lost, gained, and created" between Southern students, and the nature of the "seams" between generations.

Historians have unearthed a great deal about the efforts of activists in the 1960s and 1970s to achieve a more just society, less fettered by racial and gender stereotypes and restrictions. We know considerably less, however, about individual subjectivities and activism in the 1940s and 1950s. Because of the powerful and game-changing nature of both the Civil Rights and Women's Liberation movements of the 1960s and 1970s, the insights and frameworks of these movements have largely dominated both public memory and historiography ever since. This study asserts that the immediate postwar years were more than a mere prelude to the better-known era of civil rights and feminism. It challenges the notion, often reinforced inadvertently, that early postwar college students did not "get it," and that their consciousness of race and gender simply lacked sophistication compared to the activism of the 1960s. While this study has attempted to uncover some of the worldview that characterized students prior to 1960, it also suggests that further study is necessary to fully understand notions of activism, race, and gender among students in the 1940s through the early 1960s.

The recollections of postwar students indicate several areas for further study. Just as the sit-ins should not be viewed as the "starting point" for postwar student activism, the individual, often private sacrifices of the first African American students at formerly segregated public universities suggests that we broaden our definition of "activism." Similarly, I argue that we consider the human relations framework as a means to better comprehend the motivations and beliefs of black and white women students in the postwar era. In so doing, we will learn more about the importance of activities that took

place outside of the public eye but that, nonetheless, contributed to significant social change.[6]

"SITTING IN EVERY DAY AND EVERY NIGHT"

The first black students to integrate public universities in the South required unimaginable bravery and strength to withstand the new, hostile, and unknown environment they encountered. For these few, desegregation meant a chance at a top-notch education, but it also meant never knowing what standards would be applied, or how much better they would have to perform to earn a comparable grade. The first generation of black students to attend the University of Texas at Austin have in the last decade come together socially, giving themselves a name: "The Precursors." The Precursors include not just the first black undergraduates in the 1950s and early 1960s, but also those who attended the university in graduate and summer programs in the 1940s and 1950s. The title is suggestive of how these postwar students view themselves; a

[6] The human relations approach emphasized negotiation and dialogue to dislodge discriminatory practices. In his autobiography, Huston Tillotson professor and UT graduate applicant Astor Kirk recounts the quiet but persistent method that he used to integrate the Austin Public libraries in 1951 and, shortly thereafter, Zilker Park, and Barton Springs pool in Austin, TX. Kirk's students found that in Austin, segregation was more often a matter of practice, rather than law. In the case of Zilker Park and Barton Springs, Kirk met with Beverly S. Sheffield, the Director of the Department of Parks and Recreation, whom Kirk described as "an open and candid administrator who had a strong commitment to fairness and social justice." The two bonded over discussion about military service, and they agreed that the park should be integrated. Sheffield hoped to peacefully integrate the park "before it becomes law to do so." They developed "action strategies" whereby African American students used the park facilities gradually until it became a commonplace phenomenon. The key to this plan was that "[th]ere was to be no publicity," Kirk recalled, and indeed, no newspapers covered the desegregation process at all. Kirk, *One Life, Three Professional Careers*, 92–96.

precursor is “one who precedes and indicates the approach of another.” The act of establishing the group with a formal name has had significant effects. Despite their differing years of attendance, and the isolation they felt as minorities on a white campus, today the Precursors have created a real community.

The group has also provided a platform from which to discuss their experiences, by creating not just the language to refer to themselves and their common bond, but a way for themselves and others to identify them collectively. A significant number of the Precursors were present at the 2010 and 2011 Heman Sweatt Symposiums held at UT. This weekend conference has become an annual meeting place for the group. In 2010, the symposium theme was “Sixty Years of Integration, Civil Rights Then and Now.” Many of the Precursors took the opportunity to reflect on their student experiences. Most voiced their belief that the conference title was itself a misnomer, and that an accurate assessment of UT's past half-century would be “Sixty Years of Desegregation,” which they distinguished as a separate experience from “integration.”

Both Eva Goins Simmons and Peggy Drake Holland enrolled in the first undergraduate UT class to include blacks in 1956. They lived in the same all-black women’s dormitory as Barbara Conrad Smith, whose ouster from an opera production that year made national headlines. At the 2010 Heman Sweatt conference, Simmons and Holland spoke about their memories of daily campus life and their interactions with other UT students. Simmons recalled encountering supportive white students and faculty in the English department. Peggy Drake Holland majored in Business, however, and remembered the business school as a much less welcoming campus environment. At one point, two burly white students intentionally slammed into her in the hallway, knocking her books down. One professor informed Holland that while he could not prevent her from enrolling in his course, the highest grade she could earn was a "C," and it would go

down from there. Though she did not name the professor in question, she did mention that he was still revered by the UT community even fifty years later. In another class, Holland recalled comparing class assignments with her study partners, and realizing that she was being graded on a stricter scale. When she tried to meet with the professor to discuss the disparity, his assistant informed her that he was out of the country, even though Holland could clearly see him working in his office.[7] These experiences belie the notion of "integration" at UT.

That same year, JoAnne Smart [Drane] and Bettye Ann Davis [Tillman] were the first two African American women to integrate Woman's College of North Carolina in Greensboro. Smart recalled their first day in the dormitory. No one approached them, and they were so apprehensive about what they might encounter that, although both were hungry, they stayed in their room all night and shared a box of chocolates for dinner. The next morning they walked together into the dining hall. An initial hush, followed by whispers, fell over the facility. Most "first" black students experienced this sudden silence accompanied by stares until whites became accustomed to their presence. Moreover, the white students that they encountered often went through a learning process about what life was like for their black classmates. And they did not need to stray far from campus to be reminded of their second-class status in the community. In 1956, Bettye Ann Davis went to the Sunday services at the college Methodist church across the street. Both black freshmen were called to the dean's office the next day. A member of

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[7] Eva Goins Simmons and Peggy Drake Holland roundtable discussion of the first black UT students, moderated by Robiaun Charles at the University of Texas at Austin, April 23, 2010, 24th Annual Heman Sweatt Symposium. "Historic Conversations: Sitting at the Knees of Our Elders." Video online at: http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/events/hemansweatt/?Page=Video

the community had complained to the dean that her church attendance was "unacceptable," insisting that blacks "should not think that just because [they] were on the campus as students that other areas of the community were open and available."[8]

Edith Mayfield Wiggins was one of five African American women in the third integrated class of freshmen at Woman's College in the fall of 1958. She entered college at just sixteen years of age. One of Wiggins's first college memories was a carload of white men who drove by and yelled racial slurs at her and a black classmate as they stood in line to register. The hundreds of white women students in line were startled into silence, she recalled, but once the car drove away the talking resumed. Wiggins feared for her safety, though, and she and her classmate made plans for which way they would go if the car returned.[9] These reminders were a "slap in the face," Smart recalls, and happened frequently.

On campus, administrators initially attempted to retain the separateness required of segregation norms. Woman's College of North Carolina had a housing shortage, yet Wiggins and her four black classmates received an entire wing of the dormitory to themselves. "We knew exactly what was happening," Wiggins recalled nearly forty years later. We knew why the other rooms were empty, but we didn't think a lot about it because we were there. That was something." Neither she nor the other black students complained or protested these conditions. Wiggins explained that "up to that time we'd

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8 Elizabeth JoAnne Smart Drane interview with Hermann Trojanowski, June 5, 2008, Raleigh, NC, transcript item# 1.81.1339, *Institutional Memory Oral History Project*, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

9 That night she phoned her parents and said she wanted to leave, but she decided to stay for one semester before transferring to Bennett, an all-black women's college in Greensboro. She stayed at Woman's College all four years.

always accepted all of the ways that society had segregated us. So, you don't move from a segregated community into a segregated dorm and all of a sudden you start to feel outraged." She viewed this method of segregating black students on campus as "no different from the communities we had come from."[10] What mattered most, Wiggins recalled, was that they were now able to go to the same school as whites.[11] White students, on the other hand, were outraged that they had to sleep three to a room on the second and third floors while there were vacant rooms on the first floor. They objected vociferously. Wiggins recalled, "It just didn't make sense to them. They didn't know what the big deal was." Whatever their views on racial segregation might have been before, the white students who bore the consequences of the segregated dorm wing policy complained until the administration abandoned it the following year.

The first black students at Woman's College do not, in oral interviews, recall open hostility from their white classmates. Wiggins attributed this to the fact that they were at an all-female school, and women, she believed, handle things differently than men.[12] There was also a noticeable contingent of students on campus from the Northeast, which made for a more diverse student body.[13] Like Smart, Wiggins found that through

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[10] Edith Mayfield Wiggins interview with Robert P. Shapard, October 24, 2006, Chapel Hill, NC, transcript item# 1.81.1340, *Institutional Memory Oral History Project*, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

[11] Wiggins elaborated on this concept: "We hadn't progressed enough in our thinking about desegregation and integration to understand that there was more to integrating the university or college than accepting students to take their classes there. Because they really were trying to maintain separateness, and that we were third class." Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

[13] One reason for the presence of out-of-state students at Women's College of North Carolina was that the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill only allowed

shared interactions like class, eating, studying, and other experiences, she made a lot of white friends. Nevertheless, like other first black students at desegregating southern institutions of higher education, Smart and Wiggins sacrificed the opportunity for a normal college social life that they could have experienced elsewhere. Even though she made good friends, especially two "army brats" she met freshman year, JoAnne Smart could not go with her white classmates off-campus to supper clubs, restaurants, or theaters. Recalls Smart, "[T]here was no social life for the black students on campus."[14] She could hear the girls in the dorm getting ready for big dances, but she did not consider attending them. When additional black women students, in very small numbers, enrolled in successive years, they would play cards and stay up together in one dorm room, as kind of a refuge.

The small numbers of blacks at desegregated universities meant that students had to go to black colleges in the area to participate in social activities. Black women at Woman's College typically dated black men from Greensboro A&T.[15] As was true for many all-women's colleges of the day, on "football Saturdays," Greyhound buses would take Woman's College students from Greensboro to mingle with the men at the

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women to transfer in their junior year, so many students went to Woman's College with hopes of transferring to UNC after two years. A few exceptions applied to this rule. Women could enter UNC-Chapel Hill as freshmen if they were nursing students, or "town students."

14 Elizabeth JoAnne Smart Drane interview with Hermann Trojanowski, June 5, 2008, Raleigh, NC, transcript item# 1.81.1339, *Institutional Memory Oral History Project*, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

15 Wiggins recalled that "[T]he guys at A&T liked to date us more than at Bennett because at Bennett they had so many restrictions and rules and what not about dating and social life. And at Woman's College there weren't any, other than you just had to be in at a certain time."

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Wiggins remembers watching her white classmates board those buses while she and her black classmates stayed behind. After the one-hour bus ride to Chapel Hill, white Woman's College students stepped off of the buses in front of the Morehead Planetarium on Franklin Street as white male UNC students watched, hoping for a potential date.

Decades later, the first black students from North Carolina area colleges began meeting periodically to share their experiences, much like the "Precursors" at the University of Texas. Black UNC male alumni vividly recalled those buses full of young co-eds. In the late 1950s, they, too, went expectantly to the edge of the Carolina campus to watch as the women disembarked from the buses. One UNC alumni kidded Wiggins, saying, "You all never got off the bus." "We'd go down there on Saturday, because we heard there were some black women over there [at Woman's College], and we would go down there, and the white guys would be looking at us, like, 'What are you all doing down here, these girls are white?'" He laughed and said, "So, we would all be huddled in a little bunch waiting to see, and you all never got off those buses." But the black women at Woman's College had no idea that there was anyone waiting for them in Chapel Hill. If they had, Wiggins replied, they would have been on the bus, too.[16]

In 1960, Edith Wiggins marched outside of the Woolworth's in the famous student demonstrations that inspired the nation. After the second day, the university called a meeting with the student body and "chastised" students for wearing their school jackets and blazers in the protest. Prior to the sit-ins, many in the Greensboro

16 Edith Mayfield Wiggins interview with Robert P. Shapard, October 24, 2006, Chapel Hill, NC, transcript item# 1.81.1340, *Institutional Memory Oral History Project*, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

community were not aware that Woman's College admitted black students.[17] The sight of white and black students wearing the same upper-class jackets sent a powerful signal of solidarity. School jackets and blazers were considered "a status symbol" indicating seniority, Wiggins explained, and they were proud to wear them. She felt that by wearing her school jacket, she was signifying that "even though I was going to Woman's College, that I identified with that struggle, with that change that needed to be made." She and her classmates joined the protest begun by students from nearby North Carolina A&T, and she recalled, "I was just so proud that some other white women at Woman's College felt the same way, and we wanted to be supportive. And we wanted to do our part."[18]

Whereas Wiggins was a sophomore during the Greensboro sit-ins, JoAnne Smart was a senior. She and her family had invested a lot in her education, and had much to lose if she risked expulsion so close to graduation. Although Smart was proud of her classmates who protested in 1960, she indicated that the first black students had paid their dues in a different manner. She concurred with the sentiment expressed by a fellow African American classmate at the time, saying "I thought we were already doing our part, that we were sitting in with them every day." Laughing, she added, "every day and every night.'" The analogy is instructive. The first black students who desegregated Southern universities were engaging in a form of personal direct action on a daily basis. Even in the best campus environments, these students were at all times aware that they

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17 The administration at Woman's College of North Carolina, like many of the era, went to great pains to make sure that the integration of the college was quiet. Wiggins looked back at her 1962 college yearbook, in which the photos of the few black students were noticeably lightened. "And isn't it amazing," she mused, "how they made the black students look just like the white students in our picture? I always have to look for myself on that page. Can you believe that?" Ibid.

18 Ibid.

were occupying privileged white space, subject to racial threats and violence, and that they had to fight to be accepted as equal students.

These daily experiences of the first African American students on white campuses offer revealing lessons for an expanded definition of student activism. The sheer ability to remain a student in these circumstances constituted activism. In 1996, Harvey Beech, the first black student to earn a law degree from UNC in 1953, gave two interviews about his days in Chapel Hill. In both, he described his embarrassment when the law school dean asked him to return his UNC student swim card. During the first recollection, for a short interview for an article on the first black graduates in *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* (cited in Chapter Three), Beech recalled the memory in an almost comical light. He recalled replying "Hell no," to the dean, that he wouldn't give the swim card back. Just a month later, however, he was more candid, and the emotion of the experience comes through vividly. In the extended interview, Beech recalled that UNC's Dean Brandis sent for him during class. When he arrived, the dean informed him of Chancellor House's request that he return the swimming card that was given to him "by mistake." Beech describes the awkwardness of this exchange, and the dean's apologetic reply: "He [Dean Brandis] said, 'Now listen, I'm not asking you to do it, I'm just carrying this message, he told me to do it.'" Beech asked, "What mistake was it?" The dean replied, "'I'll tell you what they said. They said they thought you were from Brazil, that's why you got a card." Beech described his reply to the dean: "That's a damn shame. To be a native son."

Beech paused during the interview, overtaken with emotion, and said, "It bothers me now, I hate to talk about it." He explained that, over forty years later, it hurt him to think about how innocent people were cheated, and continued to be cheated, on account

of race prejudice in the United States. Beech continued to find the contrast in the treatment of international and African American students infuriating.

> And they still say, and they'd rather see a Brazilian who have never paid any dues yet. You have students and these Chinese, Germans, Japanese! I don't understand that today. I don't understand it. I get emotional about it; I get upset about it. I don't understand right now. And I never- [pause]. Let's change the subject. I can't deal with that one, even now. It's been forty years ago; I just can't see it. I pray about it. And it's still here, it's still here, prejudice. Racism is still here, there's a lot of prejudice today. Don't you let anybody fool you about it. I never could understand that. A native son who'd never been in trouble, father worked hard, paid taxes, been to school, and you'd rather see a Brazilian or a Mexican or an Indian or a Japanese to get a swimming card or go to school than you'd see your own. In North Carolina.[19]

After Beech's first year at UNC law school, he and his wife traveled to Martha's Vineyard for a summer holiday. Even though he knew that Massachusetts had a state civil rights law, he recalled that mentally, he just couldn't face the embarrassment of being denied service at the café by the dock. So they waited until they reached their destination before they had their first meal. He reflected, "if I had gone through all I'd gone through, made an A in con law at Carolina [only four out of 200 hundred students earned A's], and I'm afraid to ask for a sandwich in a White restaurant in Massachusetts, what about the fellow who's never had the opportunity that I have had?" The worst part of segregation, he concluded, was the mental effects of the "separateness."

The "separateness" that African American students experienced after nominal desegregation took place forced them to summon wells of courage to continue as students each and every day. Beech said that he and his fellow black students could not take

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19 Harvey E. Beech interview with Anita Foye, September 25, 1996. Interview J-0075. *Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007)*, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

anything for granted, and had to be deliberate about every action. "[Y]ou had to challenge every damn thing there was, in order to remove it. You couldn't stand back and negotiate, you had to just challenge it….Everywhere you went there was some obstacle. And you had to just tear it down."[20]

The legacy of the first black students to desegregate formerly all-white Southern college campuses deserves to be remembered alongside that of student demonstrators in coffee shops and theaters throughout the South. Their struggles were individual, spanned the entire postwar period, and took place predominantly away from public scrutiny. In fact, most black students mentioned nothing of these incidents and personal sacrifices to anyone besides their most trusted confidants. But their stories are an important part of the long civil rights movement. By "sitting in every day," as regular students, the actions of these self-proclaimed precursors changed the South, too.

"WE DID NOT SEE THE WORLD THROUGH A GENDER LENS"

This dissertation also argues for a reconsideration of the unique worldview of students with regard to gender roles in the postwar era. The relationships between postwar and Vietnam-era youth activists were often literally those of mother to daughter, comprising what historian Ruth Rosen calls a gender-specific "generation gap."[21]

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20 Ibid.

21 Sara M Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left* (New York: Knopf distributed by Random House, 1979), 209. See also Ruth Rosen's chapter on the "female generation gap" between postwar mothers and their sixties-era daughters in Ruth Rosen, *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America* (New York: Viking, 2000), 37–59.

Histories of the emergence of second-wave feminism out of the civil rights movement and the New Left of the 1960s describe conflicts between postwar women and second wave feminists, such as an encounter of (mostly white) women at the National Conference for New Politics in 1967.[22] Although many postwar women eventually embraced second wave feminist critiques, initial clashes suggested two distinct ways of viewing the world. Scholars are beginning to ask new questions of the postwar era, but,

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22 The standard narrative of the clash goes like this: A few thousand activists representing various threads of the Movement assembled in a chaotic conference in Chicago in 1967. United only in their opposition to the Vietnam War, the attendees at the National Convention for New Politics (NCNP) disagreed on purpose, tactics, and goals. Many hoped this gathering would restore a common platform among progressive activists. But dissension arose early between participants in workshops on various topics before the convention. Among these was a meeting concerned with sexism within the movement, an issue first articulated by SNCC organizers Casey Hayden and Mary King. The convention chair forced the women's liberationists to draft a single "women's resolution" with a group of middle-aged (postwar generation) anti-nuclear activists known as "Women Strike for Peace." The compromise resolution with these "peace women" effectively "sold out" the women's liberationists, whose demands for sexual equality never aired in the convention hall. Black Power was the message of the day, and all visions of a unified movement dissipated amid a rising tide of identity politics. But the young radical (white) women at the NCNP vowed to make no more compromises on sexual equality, thus launching the modern struggle for women's liberation. Young women's liberationists asserted that freedom began at home, literally, demanding an end to double-standards and unequal treatment on the basis of sex. The older women peace activists of Women Strike for Peace traded on their status as mothers to emphasize peace with foreign nations; completely missing the point that they, too, were oppressed. Histories that mention this incident include Evans, *Personal Politics*; Alice Echols, *Daring to Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America, 1967-1975* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989); Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (Toronto; New York: Bantam Books, 1987).

as Nancy MacLean writes, "they have not yet generated interpretive frameworks that go beyond looking backward, forward, or sideways from the women's movement."[23]

In 2006, Janis Tremper Dowd and Mildred Kiefer Wurf, two white women who were active student members in the National Student Association (NSA) in the late 1940s, contributed an essay on "Women in NSA's Early Years" to an anthology on the organization. Dowd and Wurf subtitled the piece, "Issues in Absentia." In it they address the question of "why women's issues were not 'on the screen'" for postwar students. First, they explain, "the feminist movement arrived fifteen years later." They explain that the language was not there to speak about women's issues, nor was "the word *feminist* readily at hand."[24] Although women had always been leaders in the National Student Association, they conceded, only one usually occupied an executive office. An influx of World War II veterans, mostly male, held positions of respect on postwar college campuses and in society. Down and Wurf speculate that this may help to explain why many women, perhaps feeling that they had less worldly experience than their male veteran counterparts, were not as likely to seek top officer positions. Nevertheless, as women college students, they remember having equal interest and opportunities to discuss the "big issues" of their day, although "some of us gently slid those ideas in, as custom directed, rather than presenting them in the straightforward way

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23 Nancy MacLean, "Postwar Women's History: The 'Second Wave' or the End of the Family Wage?," in *A Companion to Post-1945 America*, ed. Jean-Christophe Agnew and Roy Rosenzweig (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002), 237.

24 Janis Tremper Dowd and Mildred Kiefer Wurf, "Women in NSA's Early Years: Issues in Absentia," in *American Students Organize: Founding the National Student Association After World War II: An Anthology and Sourcebook,* by Eugene G. Schwartz and United States National Student Association (Westport, CT: American Council on Education/Praeger, 2006), 491–492.

we would now." Women were co-participants, and even leaders, but they did not explicitly raise women's issues, "nor did we even articulate those absent agenda items in any public forum."[25]

The tone of Dowd and Kurf's essay is almost apologetic, as the two writers seem uneasy in their attempt to clarify a worldview that did not protest the gender dynamics of the postwar era. What they recall in detail were those subjects that united them: peace, race, and academic freedom. "Perhaps," they wrote, "we realized that gender issues would not be accorded the same importance, and agreed with that. *We did not view the world through a gender lens*."[26] This raises the question: Does the use of gender as a lens carry with it particular assumptions that distort the lives of the generation who lived just prior to the feminist movement? Perhaps the social and cultural revolutions of the 1960s so shaped the language and unveiled the power dynamics of racial and gender hierarchies that it seems difficult, even for those who lived through it, to see history through anything but a post-sixties lens. As YWCA and SNCC activist Mary King observed: "Once change has occurred, it becomes part of you and it is difficult to remember the state of mind that preceded that alteration."[27] If we are to grasp postwar student understandings, it may be necessary to re-imagine the analytical frameworks that existed before gender arrived on the scene.

Many college-age women students saw race, peace, and freedom as the overriding issues of the day. They did not adhere to an explicitly feminist orientation, but their independent actions as women and strong internationalist convictions – in an era that

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25 Ibid.

26 Ibid., emphasis added.

27 King, *Freedom Song*, 450.

increasingly eschewed both – suggests a more complex picture of postwar gender dynamics than is apparent in the traditional vision of women's history as a succession of "waves" of political activity. This dissertation considers the goals of progressive postwar students – international cooperation and strengthened human rights – interests which confirm a distinctly internationalist view of the world. Instead of searching for a "gender consciousness" among women in the postwar era, we might learn more about women's history by asking different questions about their individual and collective identities. When the focus of activity is shifted to the realm of commitment to human rights, greater continuity may characterize twentieth century postwar women's history.

What should we make of the fact that those women who were skilled in the human relations model did not identify wholeheartedly with women's liberationists?[28] A

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28 Rosalie Oakes and Ella Baker were southern women who worked tirelessly for racial equality and encouraged the students in their tutelage to do the same. They embodied a form of independent womanhood that was uncommon in their generation. Yet they did not see the struggle exclusively in terms of race or gender. Oakes later said that she did not consider herself a feminist, even at the height of second-wave feminism. She understood and appreciated that women were fighting for equality, but for her, the strategies of the feminist struggle did not resonate.

Ella Baker took a slightly different view, commenting to Gerda Lerner in 1970 that women had carried the Freedom Movement more than men, though they received little credit for it, and "it was sort of second nature to women to play a supporting role." It was good, she thought, for young women to be challenging their traditional roles in American society, which, Baker believed, "ought to be changed." But not merely so that women could be more like men. She explained:

> I also think that you have to have a certain sense of your own value, and a sense of security on your part, to be able to forgo the glamour of what the leadership role offers. From the standpoint of my work and my own self-concepts, I don't think I have thought of myself largely as a woman. I thought of myself as an individual with a certain amount of sense of the need of people to participate in the movement. I have always thought what is needed is the development of people who are interested not in being leaders as much as in developing leadership among other people. Rosalie Oakes interview with the author, Arlington, VA, June 2007; Ella Baker, "Developing Community

generational difference may play a part, as discussed earlier. But the more universal approach of human relations, encompassing race and gender and the search for human justice on a broader level, may tell us something about the content of these generational differences. In an autobiographical essay published in 2000, Casey Hayden clarified her thoughts on the famed SNCC position paper that she and Mary King penned on women in the movement, which subsequently inspired many women to launch their own social movement for gender equality. The memo was, she recalled, "an internal education document" written when she was concerned with "maintaining the radical nonviolent core of SNCC, our old womanist, integrationist way, in which leaders and power politics were disarmed." She recalled, "I perceived this as the true locus of the feminist issue at this event."[29] This sounds like an appeal directly related to the inclusive, human relations work that Hayden practiced during the 1950s with the Y and NSA.

Hayden makes this connection to the human relations model of the YWCA more explicitly when she recalls her hopes in putting forth the more refined version of this position paper in 1965. She explains that *Sex and Caste: A Kind of Memo* "centered on the idea of women organizing themselves, and the suggested basis and style of that organizing reflects what went on at the YWCA."[30] Hayden's description sounds as if she was looking for a space that was much more in line with the precepts of human relations to discuss the role of women within the movement. It did not work out in the way she envisioned. Hayden reflected that the women's liberationist movement, a few years later,

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Leadership," in *Black Women in White America; a Documentary History*, by Gerda Lerner (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 350.

29 Hayden, "Fields of Blue," 365.

30 Ibid., 370, 371.

was not appealing to her, as it seemed to be "emulating black nationalism." Throughout her life, she explained in 2008, she followed a "human relations" trajectory, which resonated with her experiences in the interracial student movement of the 1950s and 1960s. Identity politics, she admitted, never interested her.[31]

This dissertation explores the worldview of students who came of age in the postwar era, a period of American history shaped first by an internationalist spirit at the end of World War II, and then by the deepening divisions of the Cold War. It sketches the process by which an internationalist perspective framed the kinds of thoughts and actions that led members of the postwar generation to progressive activism. The mid-to late-1940s were marked by significant interest in foreign relations, world peace, American freedom, the spread of democracy, and human rights. These discussions stimulated closer scrutiny of local practices and race relations. In the 1950s, the interest in implementing belief into social practice found expression in the study of human relations. Human relations activity in the postwar era needs more research, but the rhetoric and activities of the postwar generation indicates that changes in the ways students thought about race and gender were taking place within a larger context of concerns about human rights in general.

Although members of the National Student Association rarely spoke specifically about the changing roles of women and men, there nevertheless exists a striking continuity between the practice of human relations work in student YWCAs and the NSA. Initial histories of activism overlooked the importance of postwar women who espoused and worked in the tradition of "human relations." I suggest that we may find a

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31 Casey Hayden phone interview with the author, September 10, 2008, taped, in author's possession.

greater continuity in both civil rights and women's history if we view them from the perspective of a long struggle for human rights.

In his benediction at the inauguration of President Barack Obama, Reverend Joseph Lowery prayed for "a spirit of fellowship and the oneness of our family" and "a spirit of unity and solidarity to commit our support to our president." Known as the "dean of the civil rights movement," Lowery prayed, "And now, Lord, in the complex arena of human relations, help us to make choices on the side of love, not hate; on the side of inclusion, not exclusion; tolerance, not intolerance." This appeal for the recognition of a common, unifying humanity has deep historical roots. The concept of human relations, in particular, evokes a very specific postwar understanding of this ideal. Today, however, human relations as it was understood in the postwar era is all but forgotten. Perhaps a greater study of the methods, goals, and limitations of human relations will shed light not only on the postwar generation, but on the prospects for improved human relations in the present.

Appendix

Figure 1 Jim Smith Speaks to Students in Chicago, 1946

Figure 2 Heman Sweatt registers at UT, 1950

UNC Students Discuss Race

The first in a series of inter-racial meetings to discuss race problems at the University of North Carolina was held yesterday at the YMCA. Part of the group is shown above. (Staff Photo)

Figure 3 UNC students in human relations meeting held at Campus Y,1955

Figure 4 Barbara Smith Conrad

Figure 5 Ray Farabee with Eleanor Roosevelt, ca. 1957

Figure 6 UT Students Protest on the “Drag,” in front of Student Y, Austin, TX, 1960

Figure 7 Rosalie Oakes (middle) in South Africa with YWCA members

Figure 8 Ella Baker

Figure 9 Constance Curry

Figure 10 D’Army Bailey

Figure 11 Casey Haden (right) with SNCC colleague Dorie Ladner

Figure 12 Chuck McDew

Figure 13 Mary King

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Vita

Erica Layne Whittington grew up in Wilkesboro, North Carolina, a town known for quality moonshine, racecar driving, and the Merle Watson Bluegrass festival (Merlefest). After graduating from Wilkes Central High School in Moravian Falls, North Carolina, she attended Duke University. She majored in History and Public Policy Studies, studied abroad at the University of Glasgow, and interned at the Georgetown University Law Center. In 1999 she graduated *cum laude* from Duke with a Bachelor of Arts degree. She worked at the Eisenhower Center for American Studies at the University of New Orleans on projects including the history of Rosa Parks, Hunter S. Thompson's collected letters, and the opening of the National World War II Museum. She received the degree of Master of Arts from the University of Texas at Austin in 2003. As a doctoral student she co-founded the UT Gender Symposium, served as co-chair of the Graduate Student Assembly, and worked to secure access to university health insurance for graduate students with prestigious fellowships. She was elected to the Friar Society in 2007.

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